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THE
HOUSE OF MORVILLE ;

A HISTORICAL DRAMA,

IN FIVE ACTS.

— — — — —
BY JOHN LAKE.
— — — — —

[from the first London edition, of 1812.]

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PROLOGUE.

WRITTEN BY A FRIEND.

Long have the painter's art, the minstrel's strain,
In mists and storms placed winter's rude domain ;
A rugged sire, in sullen state, that shrouds
His lonely head amid the mountain clouds,
Who, crown'd with ice, and throned on hills of snow,
He marks with joy the wasted world below.

Errs not the hand, that thus from winter tears
The cordial smile, that winter only wears ?
His social power, from grove, and mead, and glen,
Draws to one point the scatter'd tribes of men ;
Where, round the central flame, by turns prevail
Love's warbl'd lay, and truth's instructive tale,
While feeling wakes tradition's wildest rhyme,
Or mirth and music wing the steps of time.
The lonely grove may summer's paths employ,
But winter loves the hour of social joy ;
The coral song, the dance's mingling maze,
The lay, that breathes the tale of ancient days ;
The scenes, that man's reflected picture give,
And bid the forms of parted ages live.

Oft have our eyes beheld the rev'rend sire,
Warming his aged veins by Shakespear's fire ;
Here, in gay robes, the side of beauty grace ; (*boxes*)
Here sit intrench'd in critic pride of place ; (*pit*)
Or 'mid yon lowering cloud, dim-throned on high,
(*gallery*)

With mimic storms convulse our painted sky.
When here compacted numbers mark, unfurl'd,
The changeful scenes of this our mirror'd world ;
And by one common impulse sway'd the while,
Pour the same tear, or catch the general smile ;

Who will not then the social charm confess,
Or say, that winter wears no genial dress ?
What though his hand a leafless sceptre bears,
Though round his brow a crown of ice he wears ;
Wreathes not the muse, its frozen gems between,
Her cheerful laurel's everlasting green ?

Our bard to-night aspires, with wild design,
One ivy sprig around that crown to twine ;
One wreath, which late, with trembling hope, he tore
From feudal walls, and fallen towers, of yore.
Oh ! may its leaves escape your colder frown,
And bloom their hour on winter's icy crown !
And should their spell one tear from beauty gain,
Or smooth one wrinkle from the cheeks of pain ;
Should pity dwell on one congenial scene,
Not idly spent his studious hours have been ;
Nor we in vain our duteous task pursue,
Whose only hope is that of pleasing you.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Drury-Lane Company, at the Lyceum.

Sir Thomas de Morville, a wealthy baron,	} Mr. Wroughton
Hugo de Morville, his banished son,	— Decamp
Lord Rodmond, nephew to sir Thomas de Morville,	} — Raymond
Mordred, an officer under lord Rodmond,	} — Palmer
Argaldus, a learned sage,	— Holland
Lord Ruthven, colonel of a regiment,	— Powell
Mawbry, an officer under lord Ruthven,	} — Ray
Forrester, an agent employed by lord Rodmond,	} — Putnam
Kenneth, a faithful servant to sir Thomas de Morville,	} — Carr
Bartholomy, a lawyer, friend to sir Thomas de Morville,	} — Marshall
Kerr, a lawyer,	— Penley
Porter, at Rodmond castle,	— Orberry
Greenlaw,	— Webb
Officers of Justice, Mr. Chatterly &	— Evans
Butler, at Highly-house,	— Penson
Bosco, a recruiting sergeant,	— Smith
Principal Recruit,	— Dignum
Lauder, a peasant,	— Sparks
Furbrass, a drunken soldier,	— Knight
Landlord of an inn,	— Maddocks
Servant to lord Rodmond,	— Buxton

OUTLAWS.

Fingask, chief of a banditti,	— J. Smith
Gowry,	— Waldegrave
Knowles,	— Goodman
Polwart,	— Hope
Beaton,	— Gussio

SHEPHERDS.

Cadwell,	<i>Mr. Fisher</i>
Quincey,	— <i>Miller</i>
Cummins,	— <i>Vials</i>
Cadyow,	— <i>Mathews</i>
Mrs. Villemore, mother to Agnes de Morville,	} <i>Mrs. Brereton</i>
Agnes de Morville, wife to the banished son,	
Hostess of the inn,	— <i>Edwin</i>
	<i>Miss Tidswell</i>

Officers, soldiers, servants, &c.

Chorus of soldiers—Messrs. Danby, Caulfield, Cook,
Wilson, Mead, Jones, Dibble, and Whilmhurst.

THE HOUSE OF MORVILLE.

A C T I.

SCENE I—*a barren rocky prospect, with the mouth of a cavern in view.*

enter two SHEPHERDS.

1 *Shep.* Nor are they hereabout, or sheep or goats.
Well, master, mine, I'll seek to-night no farther,
If there be not another flock in England.
I'll this way home. Eh! (*starts at seeing the cave*)
Whither have we wander'd?

2 *Shep.* This is the cavern where the wizard lives.

1 *Shep.* I fear to pass: hush! I'll be bold, and listen.

There's nothing stirs; and yet I fear and tremble,
As if ten thunders roar'd. In this dark cave,
Tis said, the old man nightly mixes charms
That conjure up the spirits of the dead
Out of their graves, to serve him. And they say,
He can cajole the devils to do his errands;
And, in the dark and dismal hours of night,
Make horrid riots here.

2 *Shep.* And yet the shepherds,
Among these mountains, hold him harmless too.

1 *Shep.* Hush! hear I nothing? hark! he's coming forth;
I'll off, as fast as feet can carry me.

[shepherds run off]

enter FORRESTER, with a packet, with great caution.

For So ! I have found the wizard's cave at last.
 The errand I am sent upon is black,
 And will not bear the good day's looking on.
 Would I were landed safe at Rodmond castle,
 Pikes should not drive me back : and yet I think,
 My way of life speaks me to be no coward ;
 But valor cannot face a conjuror.
 I am sent by lord Rodmond to this mountain ;
 Where I am to deliver up my charge,
 These papers and this basket. This perform'd,
 I am to journey with this secret packet,
 Which bears a hasty summons to the castle,
 To my lord's agent, the lieutenant Mordred.
 Plague on such roads, I say. Ha ! here's the den !
 I freeze with terror, and I know not how
 I shall deliver them. Enter I dare not,
 And I have not the breath to call him out.
 He'll come abroad : I'll hence to yonder rock,
 And wait. No, I'll go in. He's here ; I'll hide.

(retires and listens)

*enter ARGALDUS from his cave, dressed as a hermit,
 with papers.*

Arg. Another day is given to the world :
 Another day of solitude and thought
 Is added to my pilgrimage on earth !
 Again the sun his bright effulgence sheds
 On proud, ungrateful man ! this silent cave,
 For many a lingering year my calm retreat,
 Is bitter, bitter cold. The length of time
 That I have been its solitary tenant,
 Has scarce innured me to the chilling blast
 That howls at midnight through the fretted roof,
 And keeps the heavy lid from slumber free.
 Night after night, my wakeful thoughts are fix'd
 On things of other worlds ; and as my life
 Must soon, beneath the weight of age so delolate,
 Fade, like the meteor, to be seen no more,

Those whom hard fortune leads to tread this desert
May in these pages, read what I have been.

(lays the papers on a rock)

(Forrester comes forward with fear and caution)

For. Hail, father! I am charged with messages
From Rodmond castle. *(aside)* How his looks af-
fright me!

Arg. Speak, speak my son; you must not tarry
here.

For. *(trembling)* This letter, worthy sir—or this—
no, this:

And now with all respect, I take my leave.

(delivers the letter, and is going)

Arg. Remain, remain, and straight I'll give an an-
swer.

Ha! what do I behold? oh! villain, villain!

(reads with great surprise—aside)

What is here?

*(looking at the letter directed to Mordred, which by
mistake was given to him)*

How! “to the lieutenant Mordred!”

Given by this slave in his mistake, no doubt.

I guess the purport; and, as I know the wretch,
I will make bold to look at the contents.

(reads, much agitated)

It is as I suspected; and just heaven

Has made an agent in this trembling coward,

To thwart a villain's purpose and his power.

Remain, and bear my answer to your lord.

[exit into the cave]

For. *(alarmed and aside)* He is reported kind;—
well, I will hold

My shaking joints; yet cannot choose but fear.

re-enter ARGALDUS, agitated, with a small packet.

Arg. Deliver this with safety to your lord;
His orders are obey'd. Now leave this solitude:
It is not safe to tarry longer here.

For. Nay, chide not, worthy father; I obey.

[exit, in fear]

Arg. Can I give faith to what I've seen and read?
I may have err'd? no, no: tis Rodmond's hand,
Black, black and deadly as his thoughts. Read, read
Again, to prove thy eyes are not deceived. (*reads*)

"Worthy Mordred,

"Let the messenger who bears this
"notice, convey thee instantly to Rodmond castle.—
"De Morville, from the various rumors spread forth
"against his banished son, resolves instantly to leave
"the castle; which to prevent, lies within my power.
"I have sent to the hermit of the mountain, to secure
"the rank mixture that is to lull my fears. De Mor-
"ville must be despatched, and speedily. Be secret,
"and be here to-night. RODMOND."

Thou venom'd scroll, now do I understand thee,
And praise the happy chance that brought thee hither.
I have deceived this high and crafty lord;
And sent him in the room of deadly drugs,
A vapor, that but for a while procures
The outward show of death: and I will hence,
And guard its operation on the knight,
Who soon beneath its influence, as dead,
Will be entomb'd with those that lifeless are.
Ev'n now I must from hence, and be prepared
To watch his grave against his waking time;
Which I'll contrive to make the dead of night,
The more to keep me and my power from view. [*exit*]

SCENE II—*mrs. Villemore's cottage.*

enter mrs. VILLEMORE and HUGO DE MORVILLE.

Hugo. Offended too? I did not look for this.

Mrs. Vil. Oh! it was rash and desperate, sir, indeed.

Your father's anger lowers already o'er you,
And for your faults you're banish'd from his house;
But now what will he say, when he shall hear
That you have married an obscure, low girl,

Whose friends, but me, alas ! are all no more ?

Hugo. Dear mother, do not yield to grief for this.
My father has, tis true, in his displeasure
At my offences, shut his doors against me ;
But now I see my folly and my faults,
And have resolved to mend. My heated youth,
That mock'd at its allegiance to my reason,
Soon robb'd me of the empire of myself :
Then, mother dear, could I do aught more wise
Than fly for shelter from my nature's frenzy,
Into the arms of virtue ? can you think
My father will not joyfully forgive
My marriage, when tis follow'd with amendment ?
He will, he must. I'll go to him again ;
I'll kneel before him. He will pardon me ;
I shall not sue in vain.

Mrs. Vil. Well, go, my son ;
And when he shall make question of your marriage,
Tell him that though your wife is not exalted
By birth so high as you, she's not so low
As altogether to disgrace his name.
Her father was a soldier, served his king
In offices that do his memory honor :
But the inclement chances of the field,
Soon brought him to his grave, ere he had gather'd
The means of comfort for his family
That his affection sought. Go, tell him this :
And add ; that want has still been banish'd from
Our lowly roof by sober industry,
And the affection of a generous brother
In Flanders now, or on his way from thence.
He has supported us above distress ;
And should he live to reach the english shores,
He may perhaps exalt our humble state,
Higher than fortune now will let us hope.

Hugo. All, all, I'll tell my father. But my wife !
Twill be our first adieu ; yet she must bear it.
But she is here to try my fortitude.

enter AGNES, cheerful. and simply drest.

Dearest, you must prepare you for the change

Which strong necessity compels us to :
I must from hence, and leave you for a time,
On urgent business of the greatest import.

Agn. From hence! from hence! but not so speedily?
(*with tenderness*)

Hugo. Ay, sweet, I must. O! I would rather now
Have spared this painful parting; but, dear Agnes,
Let it have currency in your belief
That I will hasten my return. Adieu!

(*embracing her*)

Agn. So sudden—well, if strong necessity
Command you hence, we surely must submit;
But such despatch adds to our parting pain.
A long to-morrow may not bring you back;
Yet is to-morrow, love, the widest date
That I can name your term of absence by :
For ah! the while, my heavy thoughts shall load
So much the wing of time, that my to-day
Shall pass me with the lingering pace of years.
Yet go, my love: let not my silly thoughts
Balance a moment with your urgency:
Go, go, and prosper.

Hugo. Nothing else, my love,
Can now suffice. Adieu, my dearest Agnes!

Agn. Farewell, and may kind fortune be your
guide!
(*exeunt severally*)

SCENE III—*a gothic chamber in Rodmond castle.*

enter RODMOND, dark and sullen.

Rodm. So! all goes well. De Morville's son is
banish'd,

And I myself stand his next heir in blood.
The house of Rodmond, with De Morville join'd,
In wealth might soar the highest in the land.
I from the waste that youth did plunge me in,
Have secretly reduced my fair estates
To heavy mortgage; so this family,
The Morville branch, which I have ever hated,

Buoy'd up by wealth, has stood of late as high
As that of Rodmond : nay, it has o'ertopp'd us ;
And my old dignity, at sight thereof,
Sits on me crest-fall'n. But it shall not be.
This lawyer is the counsel for his son ;
Yet something seems to stir against his cause :
I hope it will come forth—but they are here,
I'll not disturb them. 'Tis my business now
To fawn, and play the kind officious host,
And soothing friend : and, for the stake I have,
Who would not, with his best endeavor, try ?

(retires)

enter sir THOMAS DE MORVILLE, agitated, and BARTHOLOMY.

Sir Tho. So ! you at length have found the profligate ?

I'll hear your news, whatever shape they bear ;
For I may tarry here at Rodmond castle,
Upon this visit, for some length of time.
I'll hear it now, the very worst of it :
I am prepared for every circumstance.

Barth. Then, gentle master, let not what I say
Lead forth your anger more against your son ;
For what has now occurred to him, is not
Allied with that licentiousness in which
He has of late offended.

Sir Tho. Speak, and boldly.

Barth. (with mildness) I have to tell you, sir, your son is married.

Sir Tho. (with combined affection and indignation)
Ha ! married ? profligate ! well, say to whom ?
He cannot gall me more.

Barth. You may remember
That some few years before my lady died,
She kept about her a poor orphan girl,
The daughter of a widow of the village,
And rear'd her as her own.

Sir Tho. (greatly agitated) I do remember.

Barth. And that beneath her kind and fostering hand
The tender creature prosper'd. She grew fair,

And I did never think she grew presuming.
 Well, on the death of her kind patroness,
 The child return'd to her now hapless mother,
 Who left in grief the village instantly ;
 And this so many years ago, that now
 She is arrived at beauteous womanhood,
 Then let that goodness she so early learnt,
 Have hearing where her fortune cannot speak :
 'Tis she your son has taken for his wife.

Sir Tho. Shame, shame ! no more : tis poison to
 mine ear.

But it is fitting he should suit him with
 Associates for his state. No doubt, a wife
 Of higher birth had troubled him. Well, well ;
 (*much agitated*)

My fond regard is gone. But go, my friend—
 The cases where the charters of my lands
 And moneys are disposed, are here with me :
 Go, and unlock them, and sit down to write ;
 I'll follow you anon.

Barth. Alas, my master !
 Your charters and your deeds are all prepared,
 Well written and secured.

Sir Tho. You're bidden, sir.

[*Bartholomy hesitates, and exit*

Have I not had the heaviest provocation (*after a pause*)
 To this that I'm about ? his youth has been
 A blot upon my name, e'er since he first
 Arrived at age to be licentious.
 From every shape of low debauchery
 I've o'er and o'er redeem'd him.
 I've paid his debts, till prudence would be heard.
 And many an earnest counsel have I given him,
 Which he has set at nought : and now, to boot
 And recompense me for the restless hours,
 Anxieties, and cares, that he has cost me,
 He has profaned, and fasten'd with the law
 A beggar on my blood But I will wring
 From his disloyal and rebellious heart
 A bitter price for this, I am resolved:
 My fortune and my power I will bestow

Upon my noble nephew here, lord Rodmond,
And cut off from my name and family
This reprobate, with his desert ; his shilling. [exit

enter RODMOND, as from listening.

Rodm. Can it be possible I've heard aright ?
"I will bestow my power and fortune, on
"My noble nephew Rodmond !"—twas even so.

enter SERVANT.

Serv. My lord, sir Thomas Morville sends to beg
Your presence in his chamber.

Rodm. I'll attend him. [exit servant
Now let me call to aid the feigning tear,
And make my tongue belie my heart with grace.
Thus tygers, prowling from their savage dens,
Lurk, crouch, and leap upon their destined prey. [exit

SCENE IV—*an ancient chamber in Rodmond castle.*

sir THOMAS DE MORVILLE and BARTHOLOMY discovered.

Sir Tho. Peace, peace ! no more : he is no son of
mine.

He bears my name, tis true ; a name that he
The first has put a stain or shade upon :
But he shall bear it low as he has cast it ;
Shall bear it now in beggary and rags.

enter RODMOND.

How fares my nephew Rodmond ? now my lord,
Methinks you seem as if you grieved for me.
But let not my distresses move you, sir :
I shall surmount them.

Rodm. Ay, my gracious uncle,
They'll sink before you : my dear erring cousin,
I hope will soon amend.

Sir Tho. I thank your sorrow :
But that our peace and happiness no more

May be disturb'd by such a reprobate,
 Know I have disinherited this son ;
 Have cut him off from every privilege
 Belonging to his birth and family ;
 And, in the place where his fair title stood,
 My nephew Rodmond, I have planted you.
 You are mine heir ; I have possess'd you here
 Of all that's mine, abating but supplies
 For some few benefactions and bequests,
 That are declared in these several deeds ;
 And, lest mischance should thwart my purposes,
 I give you here the writings in your hands :

(gives the deeds)

Take them away : and never may a thought
 Of them again intrude to mar my peace.

Barth. (aside with feeling) O heavy day ! that I
 should live to see it !

Rodm. Alas for this ! and yet, my gracious uncle,
 For all that's past, my cousin may amend.
 I cannot bear to see him quite cast off :
 Reserve a little for him, sir ; a little.

Barth. A little for his offspring, sir, at least.

Sir Tho. No more of this : I have already said it ;
 My will shall be respected. Come, my nephew ;
 The troubles that have weigh'd my spirits down
 Are now dispersed : we henceforth shall be merry.
 The air of Rodmond castle likes me much,
 And I shall take my summer sport with you.

Rodm. I shall be happy, sir ; and do my best
 To make those hours you stay, glide pleasantly.

enter SERVANT.

Serv. These letters for sir Thomas Morville.

Sir Tho. (to Bartholomy) Read.

Barth. (reads) " To the knight, sir Thomas Morville.

" Honored Sir,

" I am the aged widow of a tenant on your lands,
 " who by a misdemeanor offended you, and thereby
 " lost his farm : for the which, grief soon broke his

“ heart ; since which time, my sole support has been the
“ bounty of your generous son. I am now in want, and
“ know not where to seek relief. What has befallen your
“ dear son, that I now see him no more ? satisfy your
“ poor servant of this, who will for ever pray for you.

“ MARY HEATHER.”

Sir Tho. (thoughtfully) Know you, my worthy friend, who this may be ?

Barth An aged widow, sir : I know her well.

Sir Tho. Well, let her be relieved. You may depart :

See well to my commands at Morville-house.

(*ruminating*)

“ The bounty of my son ! ” know you of this ?

Bartholomy, have you remark’d that he

Was e’er benevolent to the distress’d ?

Barth. (with much feeling) Sir, there are many objects of his bounty,

Will suffer from his narrow circumstances.

Sir Tho. My lord, I feel an anxious wish for rest To-night : excuse me ; and I think, again

I shall return to Morville-house to-morrow,

I shall not any where so well recover

From my late sufferings of mind as there.

Good night : we shall have leisure yet for mirth ;

And shall not, trust me, let it pass us idly.

(*exeunt sir Thomas and Bartholomy*)

Rodm. (alone) “ I shall return to Morville-house to-morrow.”

Ha ! is it so ? is Rodmond to be foil’d ?

No, no. These parchments, let me read them o’er,

And see if all be sure. But there’s no doubt :

They’re sign’d and seal’d, and all securely mine ;

Mine by his will to-night : and lest to-morrow

Should change that will, as will is changeable,

By heaven I’ll put a spell on him this night

Shall bind them fast, and hold them mine for ever.

[*exit*]

SCENE V—*the hall in Rodmond castle.**enter a PORTER, yawning and looking round.*

Port. Ay, let me see: I have been porter here,
 At Rodmond castle, more than twenty years;
 And till this plaguy night, I always found
 My kindly sleep come on me regularly.
 'Tis late, I reckon; and I've been disturb'd
 With odious, creaking noises round my lodge,
 Which cannot truly be accounted for.
 My dog too, that, save at his eating-times,
 Will almost sleep from christmas-tide till June,
 Has bark'd to night: it must be ominous.

(knocking is heard—he seems alarmed)

I come, for swiftness is a porter's duty;
 And there is none in England knows it better.

(knocking again)

Perhaps the stranger that attends my lord.

Well, patience is a virtue he has not:

I'll let him in; and then I'll to my lodge,
 And bolt me there. The devil is surely loose:
 And he may take his rounds alone for me.

I come. Eh! what? my lord! I'm hence with speed
(hurries off)

enter RODMOND.

Rodm. 'Tis dark without, as chaos: heavy night
 Shuts every eye: the very stars are hid,
 And all things seem to suit my purposes.
 The clock is twelve: I would, the slave were here—
 Whom I have sent for mixtures to the sage.
 Loud rumor gives him strange capacity:
 As, that he holds in potions made from herbs
 A power of death, such that all those to whom
 It is administer'd shall be despatch'd
 As secretly, and free from sign of force,
 As they who die by nature's ordinance.
 Such is the drug I've sent for; and to-night
 I'll try its force. I must not ruminatè;

It is resolved: and here my slave approaches.

enter FORRESTER.

Now, sirrah, have you found my agents? say.

For. I have, my lord, and used my utmost speed.
Lieutenant Mordred was awhile from home,
But shortly with all haste he'll journey hither.
Here is a packet from the wizard sage.

Rodm. (*fixed on the contents of the letter, reads*)
“ You have, enclosed, the subtlest of death's ministers :
“ For if you hold it to the breathing nostril,
“ It kills at once the spirit-feeding air,
“ And he who breathes it dies.” Enough, I've read
Enough : here are the crowns I promised thee
For this thy speedy service ; these are left
For the next hand shall help my purposes.

For. You spoke of further services, my lord.

(*hesitating*)

Rodm. I spoke of those which you dare not perform.

For. I have not yet been idle in your service.

Rodm. Could you repress half of your faculties
Thus with one hand ; and with the other do
A deed, about the which, were they uncheck'd,
They might rebel ?

For. I understand not, sir.

Rodm. Then, speaking plain to your plain intellect,
Could you apply a deadly drug I have,
To its mortal purpose ; and possess yourself
Of these bright fifty crowns, and fifty more
To be for ever dumb upon the deed ?

For. I'm bound in gratitude. Conduct me, sir,
To where the rat's tooth chafes your substances,
And I will give him bane.

Rodm. Ha ! step aside.
In yonder chamber, where the door's ajar,
There lieth one asleep ; here, take the means,
And change that *shape* of death to death itself.
Favor shall follow you, and high reward.

For. I'm firm, my lord ; and thus it is resolved.

(*advances towards the door*)

Rodm. Should aught approach to drive you from
your purpose,
This secret door affords a safe retreat.

[*exit Forrester*

If thus tis done, my hands are clear of it.
Tis said, I think, that consanguinity
Doth highly aggravate the crime of murder :
Graves open at it ; and the buried dead
Do rise, they say, and mutter of revenge,
I do not oftentimes yield to vulgar faith ;
But now it shakes me, and I sink with terror.
All yet is still ; but soon the heavy sound
And loud alarm of death will strike the ears
Of those who heedless lie in sleep. I'll hence,
And wait the event that crowns my golden prospects.
[*exit*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

A C T II.

SCENE I—*a hall in Morville-house.*

enter RODMOND.

Rodm. So ! all is over ; and, as yet, all well.
The knight is dead, and I securely hold
The large possessions of the house of Morville :
And this low slave that I have in my secret,
As he is apt, I will provide for him,
And set him on to watch the banish'd son,
Whose scrutiny I yet have cause to dread.
So far tis well ; but by to-morrow's sun,
Morville will hear of news. If here he comes,
I'll hold out favor to him, seem to pity him,
And earth suspicion up in kindnesses.
But whilst I hold my bounty in his eye,
I'll strike the sinew that would reach to grasp it.—
But who is here ? tis young De Morville's friend

And monitor. I'll shun his gaze. Now, dark
Dissimulation veil my hate in sorrow,
And let thy tears like molten lead destroy. [retires

enter BARTHOLOMY.

Barth. I have lived too long. This house and all its
appurtenances will be in their new master's hands to-
morrow : I'll not remain to see it. Alas, my poor
young master ! ha ! it is he. I'll tarry near, and try
to learn the temper of his mind ; and, if it be in my
soul's compass, I'll help his harden'd fortune.

enter HUGO DE MORVILLE, *in deep thought.*

Hugo. This was my father's house. Why am I
here?

It is against the bidding of his will ;
And wherefore should I do it violence ?
But I am come to find some good old servant
Of my *once* kind and tender father's household,
To learn my fate. No, no ; not so, not so :
For that I know, even to its utmost curse.
Alas, my father ! twill be mine to suffer
The pang of near approaching misery ; but
The shame that comes with it will point reproach
At thy fresh-cover'd grave. Ha ! who art thou ?
(*Bartholomy approaches*)
Away, old man ! I nothing want of thee.

(*turns from him*)

Barth. Alas, young gentleman ! your father's death
Was sudden ; and in a luckless hour for you.

Hugo. His life, and not his death, has injured me.—
But why, why talk to me of fathers ? he
For whom you wear these sables, sigh, and look
Demure, might father well, and foster you ;
But has, like the unnatural bird, forsook,
And helpless left his own. Oh, gaze not on me,
With these your looks of mourning, for they wound
me.

Thou art paid for these weeds thou wearest ; and
I cannot palm thee higher to be mine.

But mark me : if thou ever in thy life
Didst take advantage of my father's weakness ;
Or in his anger, thou didst counsel him
To disinherit me ; twere better far
That thou wert in thy grave : for there's a hell
Burns here, whose fiends must have employment. Look,
Look to thy conscience well, old man.

Barth. Alas !

You would not make your blow so heavy, sir,
Did you but know the tender place you strike.
Indeed you do me wrong : for though I wear
The sables of the law, the hue that is
Too oft the reverend garb of villany,
I'm not the wretch could set me down and feed
Upon the sad misfortunes of my kind ;
And trust me, youth, I do not meet you here
To gall, but offer comfort to your wounds.

Hugo. Ha ! said you ? is there aught can give me
comfort ?

Barth. Hope, sir, for better days. What if the law,
That's now your enemy, should be induced
To loose its iron hold, and be your friend ?

Hugo. (*strongly agitated*) Go, go thy ways, and
leave me to myself.

I have no means to bribe the law, nor has
It power to heal the pangs inflicted by
A father's cruelty. Go, go, and leave me.

Barth. (*very affectionately*) Farewell : you hold me
as your enemy,

And spurn the counsel that is kindly meant.

Were I to advise, (*Hugo makes action to leave him*)

But no, you will not hear me :

Farewell, and try the means to know me better.

(*aside, going off*) I yet will sue, and find the means to
serve him.

[*exit Bartholomy*]

Hugo. (*after a pause*) Oh ! whither shall I turn, to
sue for aid ?

Where seek some kind relief ? he seem'd to think
Justice might still be mine ; and was perhaps
About to offer me his help therein :

And now I've lost him Why then did he leave me?
Yet, stretching after this last gleam of hope,
I might—and let me summon resolution
To try the law: it has as learned agents
As this old man. I'll instantly go seek
Me such a one; and, cherishing myself
With every hope that I can gather thence,
Hie quickly to my wretched home again.
Farewell, parental roof! a long farewell
This proud domain, where oft in joyous youth
I've gambol'd thoughtless of the future day!
Farewell, ye scenes in childhood loved so much,
And still to aching memory endear'd!
A long, a last farewell! [exit

enter RODMOND, *followed by* FORRESTER, *as from*
listening.

Rodm. Ay, ay, away! begone! I thank the chance
That brought me here to learn your purposes.
Go, play a little with the ready law,
And soon thou shalt be snared. Attend me, sirrah:
As thou dost hope for all I've promised thee;
Go, follow yonder. He is gone in quest
Of justice; and see he have enough of it.
Go, seek his agents; here is gold, to palm them
To be *my* friends. But let them carry on
A mock pretended suit, to dry and drain
His last resources up; and, if tis possible,
To fasten him in jail. Go after him;
For now the means have past him, he doth seem
Inclined to turn again, and reach at greatness.

[exit Forrester

enter SERVANT.

Serv. My lord, lieutenant Mordred waits upon you.

Rodm. Conduct him in.

[exit Servant

He comes too late for that
He's summon'd for; but is another tool
That I must use, should circumstance require.
He is an ill designed piece of clay,

Without a stamp of settled character ;
Uncouth in nature as he is in person ;
Valiant and cruel ; a soldier and a sloven ;
And all things that heterogeneous are.
But he has served me in dark purposes,
And may again : I'll give him countenance.

enter MORDRED.

Mord. My noble lord, I come to give you joy
Of all your fortunes.

Rodm. Welcome, good lieutenant ;
And well I thank you. But how comes it, as
The king's abroad at war, and every soldier
Is call'd from England by the drums of France ;
How comes it then, that you are left behind ?

Mord. I am, it seems, forgot, my gracious lord ;
Or only look'd upon as fit to follow
Whene'er the baggage goes.

Rodm. I have a friend
Arrived from Flanders, now the seat of war ;
And as his regiment, from the press of service,
Again doth lack recruit of english blood,
I'll try my power to get you in commission.
Ha ! now the smile is mantling on your cheek,
Your hot blood catches at it, and you stand
On tiptoe at the very name of war.
I warrant you commission ; and I shall
Rejoice to hear that you are prosperous.
I have not yet forgot you saved my life.

Mord. In doing that, my lord, I paid but interest
For debts that still I owe you.

Rodm. Thou'rt my friend,
And I will serve thee still ; and in return,
I have some plans of weight, unsettled yet,
But forming here, which thou must execute.
Thus we'll repay each other's benefits :
For friendship, in this mercenary world,
Is but a commerce betwixt man and man ;
Exchange of services and kindly acts.
Tis not the weight of obligation thrown

All in one scale, can fix a man your friend ;
For never can sincerity be found,
But when the scale of benefits is held,
Twixt friend and friend, in just and equal poise.
Thus, Mordred, while I seek to honor thee.
Thou'lt not be over-scrupulous in the means
To pay me back my debt ; I know thou wilt not.
We'll more of this. Attend me to my chamber.

[*exeunt*]

SCENE II—*a view of a burial-ground—the gothic entrance of a chapel in the centre.*

enter ARGALDUS, *wrapt in a mantle, with a torch.*

Arg. This is the place, and here the monument.
How still and awful shows the face of night,
In such a place as this ! here frightful death
Sits throned amidst the victims of his power,
And silent makes the scene. The sparkling glowworm's
Here not seen ; and the gentle zephyr, too, as
It flies along, seems in its course subdued.
But let me to the tomb : I must uncase
My quickening helpless charge. Hush ! hear I not
The tread of human foot ? it nearer comes.
If in this solemn duty I'm surprised.
As superstition shakes the boldest spirit,
I'll use the means to frighten my disturber.
My work *must* be perform'd. But all harsh means
I first will try to shun, by secrecy.

[*exit through the portal of the chapel*]

enter HUGO DE MORVILLE.

Hugo. I have employ'd a trusty advocate,
Who, for a fee, gives me great promises,
And sets my heart at ease ; and now, I'll home.
But first, hard as my father dealt by me,
A parent's claim lays hold upon my heart,
And I will see his grave ere I return.
And now I tread this solemn place of death

That holds the ruins of extinct humanity,
 I cannot choose but think upon the living,
 And of their bitter dealings by each other ;
 For but to this comes all their enmity !
 Here stands the monument that cases in
 My father's corpse. Let me approach the mansion
 That's tenanted at such expense to me : (kneels)
 And o, my father ! if the sorrowing tear
 Of a repentant son, whose vice embitter'd
 Thy latter days, be welcome to thy spirit,
 Accept it on thy grave.

*(approaches towards the door of the chapel, as if going
 to his father's tomb, which is supposed to be within-
 side—the door opens as he approaches, and discovers
 ARGALDUS, who stands before him in an attitude of
 resistance—Morville is terror-struck)*

What myst'ry lurks within these sacred walls ?
 Speak, thou unknown, whilst I have power to hear ;
 Say, who art thou, that in this house of death
 Wouldst stop my passage to a father's grave ?
(Argaldus waves his hand for him to retire)

I come not here for wanton purposes ;
 But at the urgent stimulus of nature,
 To pour my sorrows on a father's tomb.
 Who art thou, that forbid'st this holy duty ?
(Argaldus still waves his hand in silence)

Nay, speak, if thou has faculty of tongue.

Arg. Retire, retire.

Hugo. What is there I should dread
 To see within yon sacred monument ?

Arg. Retire, retire. Thou art no duteous son,
 To look for vengeance for a father's wrongs.

Hugo. What is the dreadful import of thy speech ?
 What wrongs, what vengeance, wouldst thou have me
 think of ?

Arg. Ask him that now inherits his estate.
 Hast thou not heard enough ? but hence, away,
 If thou dost hope to learn hereafter more.

(Morville attempts to speak)
 Speak not : I'll bear no further question. Hence !

You tarry here at peril of your life.

(*Morville bows his head with solemnity and respect—
the door closes*)

Hugo. Ye heavenly powers, with whom have I discoursed ?

“ Ask him that now inherits his domains !”

Let others find a meaning ; but to me

’Tis fixed in my heart, as deep as is

The centre-rooted mountain in the earth,

My noble father has been murdered.

All things accord with what he utter’d, too,

And stamp it valid ; and proclaim aloud,

Lord Rodmond was the assassin. E’en now

Methinks I see him in the murd’rer’s gripe.

I’ll to lord Rodmond instantly, and lay

The accusation broad upon his front.

I’ll have reprisal and revenge for this,

Such as shall make the guilty world look pale,

And bid the murd’rer tremble at his deeds.

[exit in great agony]

SCENE III—*Rodmond castle—a grand gothic hall.*

enter RODMOND, lord RUTHVEN, MORDRED, FORRESTER.

Rodm. I joy, my lord, to see you safe return’d.
Your voyage has, I hope, been short and prosperous.

Lord Ruth. It has, my lord : the fav’ring winds have
blown

As constant on the bosom of our sails,

As there had been no other navigation

On all the seas to woo them. And, my lord,

We did so court the wat’ry element,

And tired it with our tacking when it veer’d,

That twixt our care, and its fair courtesy,

’Twas just like youthful love-making.

Rodm. Well said :

I never heard the rough-reputed sea

So smoothly talk’d of. Are you hence again,

To where our english standard is erect ;
Or have you bid farewell to foreign climes ?

Lord Ruth. I have my sovereign's orders for abroad :
But here, at home, I have some near relations,
A brother's widow and her orphan daughter ;
And doubt, as yet, whether my love for them,
Or duty to my country, shall prevail.

Rodm. Here, my good lord, as it doth come in point,
Is an old friend of mine, a veteran soldier,
Who, lacking no respect in any service
That he hath seen, is still but low in rank.
If you can put preferment in his way,
I'll hold myself a debtor to your bounty.

Lord Ruth. My lord, I thank you : he shall be my adjutant.

An officer I lack. What say you, sir ?

Mord. That I receive your kindness gratefully ;
And where I fail in thanks, refer you to
The test of duty, and my services.

Lord Ruth. I do rely on you. But pray, my lord,
Where is the profligate and fire brain'd son
Of your so late deceased relative ?
As hot and heedless youth doth sometimes grow
To solid manhood, he perhaps may mend.
If so you think, my lord, and it will please you,
I'll do my utmost to commission *him*.

Rodm. My noble friend, it is humanely thought ;
But goodness here I fear would run to waste.
I doubt his doing good : his profligacy
Is not the casual error of green youth,
But fix'd and natural depravity.
I grieve at heart, to think what agony
His crimes have cost his father—now no more.
I was his friend ; but—(*a loud noise without*) ha ! what
rout is this ?

HUGO DE MORVILLE *rushes in suddenly, with a drawn sword.*

Hugo. Is the lord Rodmond here ?

Rodm. Call in my servants.

Be not disturb'd, my friends. What want you, sir,
That with a front like this, you threaten me
In my own house?

Hugo. I would not here, proud lord,
Before your friends, present your black account ;
Unseemly reck'nings should be paid in private,
Lest they might injure credit. Step aside.

Rodm. He rages thus because of the decision
Of his late father. But am I, my friends,
Because I hold what my deceased kinsman,
With reason, and the light of day, bequeathed me ;
Am I, for that, to be insulted thus?

Lord Ruth. I knew your father well, and loved him
truly ;

And that he would not do a thing unjustly,
I dare be surety. Pray thee, come not here,
To brave, with naked steel, the breast of peace :
Put up your sword ; or I shall take it, sir,
At all its length.

Hugo. It is not you I seek :
Tis yonder haughty lord that is mine enemy.

Rodm. Stand by, my friends. No living man shall
brave

Lord Rodmond thus. Had I used stratagem
To bend his father's will in my behalf,
I had been guilty.

Hugo. Foul, accursed fiend !
Dost thou not mark in me a darker storm,
Than a resentment for the loss of wealth ?
Dost thou not see a lightning in these eyes,
That bodes thee devastation ? yes, thou hear'st
A son demand of thee a father's life.

(*aside—Rodmond starts, terror-struck*)

Lord Ruth. This cannot pass : approach, and seize
the ruffian. (*they seize him*)

Rodm. Nay, my good friends, be gentle as you can.
I pity his distraction : let him go.
I would do much to gain him to himself ;
For what his madness charges me with now,

His settled reason will wash off with tears.
Set him at large : I do not fear his threats.

(*Hugo is released*)

Hugo. I am too rash : I am not yet prepared
To combat all this *show* of innocence ;
For show it is, and false as the black heart
That prompted thee to do so foul a deed.
Else has my grief so far bewilder'd sense,
That I have listen'd with a maniac's ear,
And held, with some phantasma of the brain,
Ideal converse. But that cannot be :
His form was human, palpable ; his voice
Articulate and clear ; as was the charge,
The damning charge, that brings me to confront
thee.—

Yet I am rash, in that, for lack of proofs,
I still must see thee triumph o'er the wretched.
Heaven, give me farther evidence ; or take
That from my mem'ry which thou hast imparted !

[*exit*]

Lord Ruth. This should not be.

Mord. 'Tis highly dangerous.

Rodm. I will be counsell'd ; you are all my friends,
Yet I am sorry at my heart, to see
Such deep distress so far from remedy.

Lord Ruth. 'Tis my advice, to put this man in safety :

He should not be at large.

Mord. Such madness should
Not range at full.

Lord Ruth. Let's after, and secure him.

[*exeunt lord Ruthven, Mordred, and servants*]

Rodm. (*after a pause*) Now, sirrah ; see you this ?
may I believe,

That what I held as lock'd within your breast,
Has found a treach'rous outlet ? are you true ?

(*with vehemence*)

For. You doubt me then, my lord ?

Rodm. I would not willingly :
But here my fears have taken the alarm ;

And cry aloud, our hiding place is found.

Eqr. I am bound to you, and would not see you live
The sport of fear. How shall I prove my truth ?

Rodm. We have the furious conduct of his frenzy
Avouch'd by witness ; thus we'll work upon't :
Go to my counsel, tell him what has pass'd ;
Say that my fame, and life, are both at stake,
And see what surety I can have against him ;
For, till he's bound, I can no safety find.
About it straight, and see he is secured.

(exeunt Rodmond and Forrester)

SCENE IV—*a rocky and romantic view, with the cave
of Argaldus in the back.*

enter ARGALDUS, and sir THOMAS DE MORVILLE.

Arg. Such are the means, and such the secret cause,
That thrust you all so sudden from sweet life,
And then restored you from the frightful grave.

Sir Tho. Most strange, and wonderful !

Arg. But you'll be secret,
And silent as the tomb you now are raised from.

Sir Tho. O father ! I am all at your command.

Arg. For much, much is contain'd in my request
Of secrecy from you : the very purposes
Of heaven demand it.

Sir Tho. Worthiest, best of men !
Then lay what bond or oath on me you will,
It shall be my devotion.

Arg. You must promise,
That for a time you'll follow my injunctions,
Which shall be for your good in every thing.

(sir Thomas bows assent)

First then, you shall put on a close disguise,
That you may not be known to be alive.
Next, promise, that whate'er temptations rise,
From friend's distresses, or your wish for vengeance ;
You'll not however strong be your desire,
Be urg'd in public to declare yourself,

Till I, your friend, unsought, présent myself,
In time and place removed far from this,
And lead you forth to peace and happiness.

Sir Tho. My friend, preserver !

Arg. Yes. thou hast indeed

A friend in me ; and for this friendship, sir,
Tis all I ask, let me direct you thus :
Here is a bag of gold that I have stored,
Part from the wicked, part from th' ignorant ;
Which the just feeling of my heart forbids,
In any shape to waste, or count my own.
Now, sir, I recommend you, take this gold ;
And travel westward, several miles from hence.
Take these particulars, which shall instruct you
Where you will find a small but pleasant manor,
Which you must purchase with all swift despatch.
It has appendages annex'd to it,
That will hereafter help *your* cause and mine.
And when, my friend, you are establish'd there,
Call back into your service the good lawyer
That you have long employ'd ; but be aware,
You do not e'en to him, declare yourself.

Sir Tho. In all things you shall be obey'd : farewell !

[*exit sir Thomas*

Arg. Now this way, and I'm in my cave again.
Ye venerable rocks, and dreary cell,
What holy hermit excavated you,
And gave to you that pleasing solemn air
That is so dear to me ? or were ye form'd
When nature shaped her great primæval mass,
That every age you might invite to you
Some listless solitary wretch like me ;
Who, leading here a philosophic life,
Might show ambitious, discontented man,
How little can his proper wants suffice ?
To me, at least, ye've taught this useful lesson ;
E'en in the wild, content brings happiness.

[*exit into his cave*

SCENE V—*view of an inn on a road.*

enter HUGO in haste—he looks back as if pursued.

Hugo. Well, I will fly no farther: at this inn I'll halt, and meet my fate; for it were cruel

LANDLORD *enters and listens.*

To carry home my load of wretchedness,
To plague the innocent. Could I e'en pay
The heavy penalty that is demanded
Of me for Rodmond's safety, on whose life
I'm charged with making an unjust attack,
Twere vain to do't; for in my heart tis fixt
So firmly that he took my father's life,
That I should rush again upon his throat,
More fatally perhaps than now I've done.
Come then, pursuers, take my liberty;

Freedom is useless to my misery. [*exit into the inn*

Land. (coming forward) I like not your travellers who reckon their abilities before they go into my house. I should be thin of customers if my neighbors did so. Poor gentleman! he seems in distress: if so, he shall want for nothing here. I'll follow him, and learn his wants. But who comes here, helter-skelter, ding-dong? one on horseback. He looks a liberal customer; at least of the spur and whip, if one may judge from the heat of his horse. And here come others after him in haste, My house will soon be full at this rate. I'll in, and prepare whilst they dismount.

as he goes in, enter BARTHOLOMY.

Barth. I've pass'd these harpies. Here is an inn; I'll make inquiry: for while danger posts so quickly at his heels, he may not 'scape its snare. Friend, have strangers halted here with you lately?

Land. Many have passed onward, some are within, and others stand at the gate unhorsed.

Barth. Have you seen a youth pass by on foot, whose face bore the marks of sorrow and despair.

Land. Such a one has e'en now enter'd the house : I'll lead you to him.

Barth. Friend, a word. If I do read aright your countenance, you can feel for the oppressed and helpless. He whom you have sheltered is in want, although born to fortune. But he hath committed no crime, and every good man should be his friend.— Here is money : shelter him from the gripe of those who now pursue him, and—but they are here ; quickly lead me to him.

Land. Poor gentleman ! this way. Poor gentleman !
[*exeunt into the inn*]

enter two OFFICERS.

1 Offi. He is here. I am certain. We should have seen him, had he proceeded up the hill.

2 Offi. Ay, ay, he's here, I warrant you. Let's in. But beware : if he is armed, he will fight, or story wrongs him. (*they knock at the door—the landlord opens it*)

Land. Had you used more courtesy, and less violence, you would have been answered sooner. What want you ?

1 Offi. We have authority to search this house for one that has escaped from justice : deny him not ; we are certified right well that he is here.

Land. If you stay here to disturb the peace, I'll pay you in coin you may not like.

2 Offi. Stand by, and let us pass.

Land. The house is full, my bullies.

1 Offi. The law has bolts. (*attempts to pass*)

Land. And so have I. [*exit, and shuts the door*]

1 Offi. To reason from this fellow's insolence, he should be justice of the peace, but let us shoulder our authority, and rummage for our game, or it will escape. We'll find another entrance. [*exeunt*]

SCENE VI—*an apartment in the inn.*

enter MORVILLE, loud knocking is heard.

Hugo. Thus am I caught ; the toils close in upon me ;

And I could idly chafe, and beat the air,
To struggle for escape. So, savage fortune !
I'll mock thy rage, and meet thee calmly here.

(throws himself down at the table, and covers his face with his hands in agony—knocking repeated)

enter OFFICERS.

1 *Offi.* That's he.

Arrest him, sirrah.

2 *Offi.* You're our prisoner ;

And at no small expense of trouble too.

Come, come along.

(they seize him—and are attempting to carry him off)

enter BARTHOLOMY.

Barth. How, officers ! what means this violence ?
Let go the gentleman ; you do disgrace
The power you serve. What has he done, I say,
That thus you dare to aggravate distress
By base unnecessary violence ?

But you shall answer it. Show your authority.

2d *Offi.* We pray your pardon, sir ; we thought not
of meeting here with you ; whom to offend, we know
would go hard with us elsewhere.

Barth. Show your authority.

1 *Offi.* These papers, sir. *(delivers the papers)*

Barth. There's nothing deadly here. *(reads)*

“ For libels uttered against lord Rodmond, and
threatening his life—a thousand pounds ; and surety
for twice as much.”

A bond, a bond ;

I'll give my bond and surety straight for this ;
That at the time this warrant specifies,

This gentleman delivers up himself
To answer every charge.

1 *Offi.* I am satisfied.

2 *Offi.* And I; and praying for your pardon, sir, we
take our leave. [*exeunt officers*]

Hugo. I cannot form my thoughts, nor give them
utterance.

I have offended thee, my valued friend ;
But as resentment cannot gain thee aught
Against so little worth as I possess,
Assume the better office, and forgive me ;
For I am buried in misfortunes, like
A vessel in the ocean, past its centre,
That sinks to rise no more. Come home with me ;
And when the ferment of my heart subsides,
You'll see its penitence and sufferings,
And shall refuse me pardon if you can.
[*exeunt Morville and Bartholomy*]

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

A C T III.

SCENE I—*an apartment in Rodmond castle.*

enter RODMOND, FORRESTER, and LAWYER.

Rodm. Come you to me with silly tales like these ;
As, that because his friend has wrested from you
His suit at law, you have no further means
To work my purpose on him ? it is well !
I thank you for your favors, sir. I thank you :
You have been diligent.

Law. Nay but, my lord,
I had not warrant from you to advance
In any strict proceedings or attachment,
That could o'erpower him. This requires full thought,
And puts me to my asking.

Rodm. Ask not me ;

Lay him in prison, or see me no more.

Law. Nay, now, my lord, you speak indeed in point.

Tis true, he is my debtor in a sum

Which, in his present state, he cannot pay :

I'll forward on my business cheerfully,

And little fear but that I shall succeed *[exit lawyer]*

Rodm. Ay, to it straight ; but if you fail, beware ;

I'll look for other means. Come hither, sirrah.

You say, lord Ruthven marched yesterday

Towards the west, where he is to remain

And wait the further orders of the king,

For. He did, my lord.

Rodm. Lord Ruthven oft hath talk'd,

And doubtless in your hearing, of a niece,

Who long hath lived in low obscurity.

For. He hath, my lord, with much regard and favor.

Rodm. Strange fancies have of late so fasten'd on me,

And every shadow moves my apprehensions :

For, in the course and passage of my life,

I've known the most unlook'd-for things occur.

Know you the maiden name of Morville's wife ?

For. I may not say I do ; but, my good lord,

At your command I'll quickly find it out.

Rodm. It matters not to me whoe'er she be ;

For, did the beggar's fate involve in it

My nearest kin, my safety urges me,

And I must have him down. So, get you hence.

Yet stay : I must have farther speech with you.

I have of late much fallen from my sleep ;

And, when the little that I have of it

Comes on me, it is frightened and disturb'd

By hideous dreams. I know that they are nought,

Yet cannot shake the sleeping fantasies

From off my waking thoughts. And let me tell you,

That 'mongst the phantoms and the various forms

My sleep of late hath oft presented to me,

You frequently are one. I have trusted you

With secrets, and I seek to honor you

With intimacy : see you bear it well.
By hell I swear, if time or circumstance
Should with a voice articulate, proclaim
Thee traitor, and lord Rodmond's foe ; or e'en
Should I see cause to harbor doubt of thee ;
Sharp torture in a thousand shapes shall wait thee.
Proceed upon your errand : and remember,
If true, I am thy friend ; thou know'st the rest.

[*exit Rodmond*]

For. (alone) Is this a line to fathom out the truth ?
Forsooth, my master, these your sleeping thoughts
Do couple something with my waking ones ;
For though I dare not be your enemy,
I serve you less for favor now than fear.
Indeed there is no safety left for me,
But in obedience to your purposes.
I tremble at them : yet must play my part ;
A wicked hand, to your most wicked heart.

[*exit Forrester*]

SCENE II—*changes to an apartment in mrs. Villemore's cottage.*

enter LAWYER and OFFICERS.

Offi. What has lord Rodmond promised us for this ?

Law. Nay, question not : if we can fleece him bare,
And lodge him safely in the county prison,
All will be right ; lord Rodmond's generous.

Offi. Has Morville yet received your letters, sir ?

Law. He must by this—but he is here to answer.
Our road is not by stepping-stones of courtesy.

enter HUGO DE MORVILLE—*after a little conversation,*
KENNETH *enters, and retires back, and listens with*
much attention.

Hugo. Your visit, gentlemen, is unexpected.
What may its import be ?

Law. Nothing of note.

The summer time invites us to the country :

And, posting near your residence, we came
To take the small arrears that now are due
Upon your suit; then shall we be prepared
To start anew.

Hugo. Soft, soft, I pray, good sir:
I wish you would have staid the sending for.
Small summer tis with me. I've had your letters,
Stating that my affairs grow desperate:
Yet want your fees. and talk of other terms!
I have given orders to withdraw my suit;
Yet thus you come to me, as if I were
A mine, that, farther dug, would better pay
The diggers' hire. Fy! make distress your job!

Law. Job, sir? job, sir? the law's our trade. Job
truly!

When you have done with us, pay us our fees,
And we'll job you no more. Since you've withdrawn
Your suit, pay down the costs for doing so.
Twere for your credit more.

Hugo. Your insolence
Becomes you.

Law. 'Sdeath! we should be puzzled much,
To fashion phrase were insolent to *you*.
In insolence you seem yourself well practised;
But I will none on't: nay, my haughty sir,
You should not insolence a dog of mine.
We want our dues, and we will have them too.

Hugo. What tempest's this that gathers round me
now?

Tell me what amount's your charge, and all
You heap on me besides.

Law. (*pulls out a scroll*) Expense and items—

Hugo. The sum, the sum.

Law. Expense, two hundred pounds;
And, to withdraw your suit, two hundred more.

Hugo. How? are you men? or demons in that
shape?

Have you thus dealt by me? you, whom I trusted!
How cruel are you! can you thus select
Misfortune's victim for your iron gripe?

Law. Sweet sir, we idly waste our time in talk :
It was to get our money we came here ;
Pay us our money. or we must have you.

Hugo. I have no money ; and. unfeeling ruffians,
What you can manage, you may take of me.

[*exit Morville*

Law. Arrest him, sir.

Kenn. (*who has been in the greatest distress
during the scene, comes forward*)

And take me for your tipstaff.

(*places himself before the door*)

Offi. Why, caitiff low and vile, would you disturb
And interrupt the instrumented law ?

Give way, or I will force it. (*pushes Kenneth*)

Kenn. Force to force ;

(*they wrestle—Kenneth throws him down*)

And honesty be umpire : law is down.

enter HUGO, in haste.

Hugo. Hold, hold ! how rash ! do not resist, good
Kenneth :

Your kind intentions here would do me wrong.
These villains will be back'd by higher power,
All innocent of what it is about.

Law. Do you remain without, and guard the house.
Fear not I'll to the nearest magistrate,
Show our authority to him, and tell him
How we have been abused ; no doubt but he
Will find us pound proportion'd to our game.
Justice hath fetters for this job of yours.

(*to Hugo and Kenneth*)

[*exeunt lawyer and officer*

Hugo. Good Kenneth, go and send your mistress to
me. [*exit Kenneth*

To choose betwixt a jail and liberty,
There can be no demur : it is resolved.

enter AGNES.

Come here my Agnes, my beloved wife,
My only solace in adversity.

Are you prepared to take a tedious journey ?

Necessity is pitiless, my love ;

And, hard as tis to tell you, we must suffer.

Agn. I know the cause, and am prepared to go.

Fear not for me : as your distresses gather,

Methinks I gather strength to bear with them.

Yes, let the spoilers seize our little store :

The honest wants of nature are but few ;

And if we can but hide from mock'ry's eye,

We'll have the chance of comfort thousands have,

Who earn and eat the coarse and scanty crust,

And never curse their lot. My mother's thrift,

And gentle precepts, long have taught me all

The various labors of our household-need ;

And, void of shame, and cheerful will I use them ;

And do for honest hire, what I have done

Before for pleasure. Come, let us away.

Hugo. This is too much ; and yet it must be so :

I see no hope but what you counsel to.

Let us prepare to hasten from this place,

And hide our miseries where we are not known ;

And for your sake, my love, I'll bend me down

To labor's yoke. But ere I see you tack'd

To menial task for hire, I will sustain

The office of the execrated slave.

Come, and prepare ; and, as we journey on,

Be love our prop, and hope our guiding star. [exunt

SCENE III—*a view of a camp—a sutler's tent on one side*—LANDLORD, SOLDIERS and RECRUITS discovered drinking—they huzza.

Land. Ay, this is my custom : with the merchant, I drink trade ; with the farmer, I drink plenty ; and with the soldier, I drink the king. Here's long live the king. (*they all huzza*)

I Recruit. I love my king as I do drinking : here's to his health again. (*they huzza again*) But now, brothers, what think you of this same powder and ball that they fight wi' now-a days ?

2 *Recruit*. Why, I take it to be main unkindly in a man's body. But a fig for it : I care not for it.

1 *Recruit*. Nor I, brother : we must all die some time ; heaven mend us !

2 *Recruit*. Ay, that we must, if we are soldiers.— But here comes our superior : I vow I take courage at the sight of him.

enter SERGEANT.

Serg. Strike up, drums : fall in, recruits : we should be forth, and beating up for men. Fall in. (*drums beat, and the recruits fall in awkwardly*) Oh, monstrous ! I have no patience. Corporal, draw them up : touch them on the shoulder thus ; feeling is a fine teacher of understanding. This way, sir : face to the right. Hold your head up, sirrah ; this shoulder is the highest : we must have bolstering and bracing ; drawing of teeth, and setting of knees.—Zounds ! were it not for soldiering, men would belie their creation, and get upon all-fours.

1 *Recruit*. Marry, now, captain-sergeant, we are good recruits ; we are men that training will make defective. I warrant you we have hearts in our bodies, and that's the thing for a soldier.

Serg. Oh, as for that, I believe you ; you are prime men : would I had all the gold I could wager upon the lankest of you against any that ever wore mustaches ! what say you, my hearts of heroes ? would you not fight ? would you not fight ? old England's the word : we take the field, we load, we present, we fire ; and then in the smoke, death and fury, rank and file ; kill and slay, kill and slay ! (*while he speaks, he gives action to the points—and at the close all the recruits break their ranks, imitate him, and huzza*) death and disgrace ! halt, halt ! fall in again, fall in : your bravery makes you irregular ; but superfluity of courage best becomes a soldier. Fall in. Now let us to the market-place. You that are short must stand to day on tiptoe ; you that are sparely-fleshed, must blow out your lank cheeks ; and all of you hold up your lazy eye lids, and carry you like men. So, so ! now, brother soldiers, I'll

give you a song and a toast that my grandfather taught me when I was a boy : he was a brave soldier, and fought against the moors and saracens.

SONG.

I.

When England's knights, a warlike band,
The christians' wrongs did wail,
Bold Richard fought i'th' holy land,
All cased in harden'd mail.

Then, soldiers, drink this noble toast,
" Fair England's honor'd name !
" The king, the soldier's much-loved boast !
" Her Richard's lasting fame ! "

Chorus. Then, soldiers, &c.

II.

His banner bore the holy cross,
The pilgrim's staff his shield ;
And sar'cens mourn'd the heavy loss,
While slaughter ranged the field.

Chorus. Then, soldiers, &c.

III.

The grained ash that form'd the spear,
The battle axe of steel,
Made moorish hearts all trembling fear,
And England's foes to feel.

Chorus. Then, soldiers, &c.

IV.

Then let the world in arms combine,
And scenes of blood renew ;
She ne'er shall bend at conqueror's shrine,
While to herself she's true.

Chorus. Now, soldiers, drink this noble toast,
" Fair England's honor'd name !
" The king, the soldier's much-loved boast !
" Her Richard's lasting fame ! "

(the sergeant leads them round—the recruits move in great awkwardness, and all in confusion march off—as they go off, FURBRASS, a drunken soldier, enters in haste, staggering)

Furb. Here I come, my lads, here I come—eh! how; *(looks around)* what; are they gone, and without me. How damnable, that val-valor should be slighted thus. This is the second affront put on me to-day. A fellow had the pre-presumption to say that lord Ruthven had discharged me because I tip-tipped; but he lied like a dog, and I made him eat the lie like a cur. But who's to eat up this affront? well, I won't be squeamish, I'll drink it down. *(puts flask to his mouth)* Why, zounds! it's empty. *(tries again)* Not a drop, not a drop. Poor bottle, and poor Furbrass. Well there's more in the house, if I can reach it. *(staggers towards the house, and slips down)* How cursedly these village roads are paved. Ho! landlady! mrs. Puncheon! sweet mrs. Puncheon, fill my flask.

enter LANDLADY.

Land. Who calls? o! you drunken knave!

Furb. Fill my bottle again, sweet wench—fill my bottle.

Land I'll fill you no more bottles, that I won't. You've been drunk these three weeks, night and day. I'll fill you no more bottles, I warrant me.

Furb. Give me no more drink! alas! would you have my inwards fritter to cat gut? would you make a musical instrument of my body? I have not drank, heaven knows the time. Fill my flask, sweet mrs. Puncheon.

Land. Begone, drunkard! here are customers.—

Furb. Then I'll to the tap myself—there's no mending it else. Drunkard, quotha! ha! ha! ha! that's a good joke—but I can't laugh—I am so dry.

[exit staggering into the tent]

Land Now an' this ben't a shame to be seen; and as I tell mr. Puncheon, we'll lose our reputation by it at last: for what with drunken soldiers and the like,

decent company is frightened from the house. And as I live, yonder's a couple going to the village—no—they are coming this way. *(retires up)*

enter HUGO and AGNES, *dressed in neat but mean attire.*

Hugo. Come, dearest, come. I must not have you droop.

I know that your distress is most for me ;
But let not that have thought, I do beseech you :
For with this garb, I've put on carelessness ;
And what all other poor men do for bread,
Most frank, and freely now methinks can I.
Here is the inn, and here we'll rest to night :
And with the sun to-morrow hie from hence.

Land. *(comes forward)* The best inn of the village at your service. *(courtesying)*

Hugo. You, I presume, are the good hostess here.

Land. It is no presumption, sir, I am the landlady. This way, sweet lady ; this way.

Hugo. Go in, my love, and I will follow straight.

[exeunt Landlady and Agnes]

But first, I'll snatch this moment to myself,
And call my scattered thoughts from wandering.
I do remember now we are at war,
And here are men recruiting for the king.
Those who have kick'd kind fortune from the door,
And those whom she casts off : those who want will
To work for bread, and those that know not how :
Youth, bold and resolute, and years forlorn,
Flock to the threaten'd bulwarks of their country,
And swell her armies. I, a being of
A strange and alien kind ; a creature monstrous
To all of those, here too will seek for succor !
I'll be a soldier—I will to the field ;
And, in the front and heat of dangerous battle,
Seek refuge from the ills that goad me here. *[exit]*
As HUGO goes off, the Landlady drives FURBRASS forth.

Land. Forth knave, and look for other quarters.

Thou braggart rascal ; thou sorry varlet ; to dare address a lady, and my customer too.

Furb. She's an angel ! 'sdeath ! I am choked : lost—lost. I am quite lost between love and liquor.—What a beautiful soul ! why her skin is as fair as my buff belt ; her eyes are as bright as my breast plate in the garret ; and her hair—o ! her hair is as black as my cartridge box. Now will I take to love, and leave off drinking.

Land. You jackanapes, and varlet dare to show thyself again, and I'll pound thee to a jelly. (*seizing his ears and pulling them*) What rank art thou of, truly, that thou should'st cope with thy betters ?

[*goes off in a passion, unobserved by Furbrass*]

Furb. Of the rear rank. I am short, plaguy short ; only-scurvy five feet four : but I am as my poor mother bore me, old Puncheon—and why should I grumble. I would the old creature had pushed me out another inch or two ; then I had been a general by this. 'Tis much loss to the service, I was born so low : yet there are short tiny generals too, that kick up a damnable dust, old Puncheon. (*turns round as if to hear her answer, and perceives she is gone*) Gone ! is not this most villanous ! and here's an empty flask. I have drank all the seas over from Egypt to England, and all through England to this ; and I am now as dry as a fish. O ! mrs. Puncheon, mrs. Puncheon ! and then to get in love ! I am so faint with it, I can scarcely hold my legs. (*staggers towards the inn—but hearing a drum, turns round quickly, and goes off at the opposite side—as the drum beats he calls out*) March ! [*exit marching*]

SCENE IV—a view of a camp—lord Ruthven's tent in the centre, with the english colors displayed upon it.

enter lord RUTHVEN, with letters, attended by officers.

Lord Ruth. Gentlemen, here, you read my sad distress ;

Most heavy news this letter bears indeed.

My sister is no more ; and my dear niece—

But I will read again this piteous tale,
And plant their bitter sorrows in my memory. (*reads*)

“Honored sir,

“Letters coming daily here, to my late beloved
“mistress and her daughter—from the love I long have
“borne them as a servant, I take upon me the pain-
“ful task of informing you, that mrs. Villemore is num-
“bered with the dead; and her sweet daughter is lost
“to all who knew her. Ill-fated, she was lately mar-
“ried to a gentleman, who, differing with his family,
“was reduced to poverty; and he, with your niece,
“have been driven from their home, and have wander-
“ed we know not whither. Grieving for the grief I
“send to you, I am your lordship’s humble servant,

FRANCES HEATHER.”

“If your dear niece is known of by any of her friends,
“it is by one Bartholomy, a lawyer, well known in
“London.”

Offi. I grieve indeed, my lord, and wish I could
Give comfort to your troubles, and distresses.

Lord Ruth. I’ll quickly write to this Bartholomy,
And, if I do not profit by his answer,
I’ll leave my regiment, gentlemen, with you,
And search till I have found my injured child,
And brought the world to reck’ning for her wrongs.
And now I think on’t—I will hence to-night.
Farewell! I shall be careful to supply you
With notice where you still may write to me.

Offi. We wish your lordship here a prosperous jour-
ney,
And shall abide most strictly by command.

[*exeunt severally*]

MORDRED and FORRESTER come forward.

For. (*pointing to the side they enter*) Ay, that’s the
man—the woman is his wife.
His wants have made him enter in your regiment.
I had, sir, from lord Rodmond, strictest charge
To follow him where’er he wander’d to,
And thus I have succeeded. Here’s your charge.
(*delivers a packet*)

Mord. (*reads*) “Morville, by a strange, untoward chance for me, has, I find, enlisted in the regiment of lord Ruthven; and, fearing he may discover him, I entreat, that, as his adjutant, you will thwart his temper, and provoke him to desertion. In doing this, you prove your love for—
RODMOND.”

Tell lord Rodmond, I am his friend; and, that I'll lead this enemy of his a life,
Shall make him desperate.—Say, I'll hunt him so,
That he shall show his head no more in England,
Unless he live in holes and hiding places.
This way, and bear my duty to lord Rodmond.

[*exeunt*]

SCENE V—*a more intricate part of the road, which now leads through a wood.*

enter RODMOND, *sullen and musing.*

Rodm. Must I then fawn and cringe to slaves like these?

Sure tis the curse of villany to dread
The instrument it uses. I suspect,
Most heavily suspect, this Forrester,
Whom I have made the agent of my crime!
He has too much of woman in his heart.—
Must I then moil, and fear, from day to day,
Because I dare not rush upon the throat
Of one that is at once my dread and hatred!
Hugo de Morville, lives my jealous foe.
Twice have I tried to manacle him by law.
And twice have fail'd—ay, and in the attempt,
Brought deadly risk and peril on myself.
But who is here? my doubted messenger;
Whom with more care, I will henceforward trust.
He comes; I've watch'd him, and will let him pass.
(*retires*)

enter FORRESTER.

For. The crossing roads and by-ways I have come,
Perplex me so, I know not where I am.—
There is a curse, methinks, a wayward fate,

Attends me lately wheresoe'er I go.
Here is a begging peasant on the road ;
I'll ask my way of him.

enter ARGALDUS, disguised as a mendicant.

Good morrow, father.

Arg. (aside) This is the miscreant employed by Rodmond :

I'll stay and counteract his evil purpose.

For. Good morrow, stranger. From your tottering steps

You come not far : pray live you in these parts ?

Arg. Ay, ay : I hear but hardly now indeed.

Men might plot murder now beneath my ear,
And creep with poison upon men asleep,
Without my hearing them.

For. (starting) Of poison, speaks he,
And murdering men asleep !

Arg. My eyes, too, fail me ; *(staring at Forrester)*
I scarcely know a villain by his looks.

For. (trembling) Bear I the tokens of my guilt about me,

Or, does this beggar, rave on truth by chance ?

But I must on, and learn my way if possible.

Pray, hoary father, of these crossing ways,
Which leads me to the village Ironside ?

Arg. The village Ironside—o, this way, man.

(pointing to an opposite way)

But you have far, and round about to go.

Take special care you journey not by night,

For danger is abroad and it will find you.

For. I see some shepherds, yonder, who may guard me.

Good father, pray remain but for a moment,

Till I some questions ask of these poor hinds,

And I will journey thither with you straight. *[exit*

Arg. The village that the wretch inquires about,

Is near at hand ; but had I sent him there,

He would have intercepted travellers

I've seen in deep distress : they are at hand,

Poor wanderers, as they left their humble home.
I'll hence, and lead them from this threat'ning danger,
[exit

enter FORRESTER in haste.

For. How ! gone. Nor hind, nor shepherd have I
seen :

My haste has scared them. Would I were well housed :
For, in this dangerous intricatèd heath,
The crimes to which I have been accessary,
Are heavy, and look frightful in my face.

Rodm. (aside) The listening, here, I find may help
me much.

For. I was about returning to lord Rodmond,
Determined to wade on in wickedness,
And fearing to draw back : but darkness has
Arrested my resolves. If I were innocent,
I'd have my fears in such a place as this ;
But, as I am, I scarce have left in me
A nerve to lean my body's weight upon :
I tremble so with fear.

Rodm. (behind) Coward, and wretch.

For. There seems a kind of desperate hope before
me,

Could I e'en now repent.

Rodm. Is't so ; repent !

For. My furious hand was raised against the father,
And to complete my crimes, the son must follow.
Ha ! it grows darker while I speak of it.
The wild heath flashes with its hideous lights,
And for the dread of slough, and precipice,
I dare not stir. Let but to morrow come,
And I'll release me from this pain of guilt.
I will betake me to the nearest justice,
And with the hope of pardon for myself,
Be evidence on Rodmond. With this resolve,
I'll take the thicket's shelter till the morning. [exit

(Rodmond advances)

Rodm. Ay, traitor, do : and when the morning
comes,

As thou hast said, be evidence against me.
Curse on thee, thou wer't baser than I thought thee.
No trivial circumstance had now provoked
My hand to dip in blood : but such thy purpose,
That either thou, or I, must be the victim.
Thy requiem, wretch, be equal to thy guilt ;
Thy *falsehood*, not *my hand*, thy blood hath spilt.
(*draws his dagger, and rushes after him*)
[*exit*]

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

A C T IV.

SCENE I—*Morville castle.*

enter BARTHOLOMY and KENNETH.

Ken. Say you then that all has failed ; and that my good old master's son has nothing more to hope for ? how cruel, to drive him from his humble cottage. I've heard, my friend, that in trying to save him, you have reduced your little fortune : well, for this you'll be rewarded.

Barth. Good Kenneth, I have got another master, and shall not, therefore, miss it now.

Ken. Say ye : who is he, master Bartholomy ?

Barth. Indeed, my friend, I scarcely know myself. He is a man, good sir, whom all must love : Of temper, strange, and unaccountable. Or, from the weakness of his sight, or whim, He always wears a mask upon his forehead. His manners are austere ; his nature close : And deep retirement seems his whole delight. Yet, from behind these humors of his mind, We feel a generous, and indulgent master ; Harsh to no living creature but himself. But prithee, friend, are thy attachments fix'd On the lord Rodmond's house and fortunes now ?

Ken. Ah, sir, you know his haughty nature well. I never looked for kindness. I am reckoned amongst the antique lumber of the house, and left to stay or go :

and you see my choice. I cannot leave it, master Bartholomy. I wander round these chambers and through these tapestried saloons ; and, as I pass from one to the other, recount the joyful scenes I have beheld in them in earlier times. I am a kind of living chronicle of the last glories of the Morville race.

Barth. I do not wonder at your lingering here. But prithee, does lord Rodmond, carry well His late increase of fortune ?

Ken. As for the late improvements of his fortune, they bring, it seems, but small increase of happiness : and I am told by those who most are near him, that he demeans himself so incoherently, they fear he staggers in his reason. But I must leave you now : suspicion lurks in every corner.

Barth. Farewell, my friend : we'll talk of this again, When next we meet. My good old friend, farewell.

Ken. Farewell ! farewell ! *[exeunt severally]*

SCENE II—*changes to the view of the camp.*

enter HUGO DE MORVILLE, *in the greatest agitation.*

Hugo. Is't possible ; that officers, appointed To train and lead their country's arms to war, Should loose their hasty humors, and caprices, On those that they command ? I must be wrong ; Yet, whence is it, that in, or out the ranks, This adjutant unkindly presses on me ; And when I'm all unconscious of a fault, Rudely upbraids, and storms, and frowns at me ? He check'd me now even in the act of duty, And though I studied hard to hasten with Obedience, rudely thrust me from the ranks And see, he follows me.

enter MORDRED.

Mord. Come hither, sirrah ! You frown and look askance, as if you aim'd Rather at high command than just obedience. Each motion of you's hamper'd in an air Of haughtiness and stern disloyalty.

You shall not blow your humors round you here.

Hugo. It is my study to the utmost, sir,
To do my duty in becoming manner.

Mord. Sir, you shall do it humbly, ay, and servilely ;
As a just penance for your surliness.

Hugo. Alas ! I know not, worthy sir, your meaning.
I serve my king, and reverence you my officer,
With scrupulous fidelity and truth ;
But do not thus let passions loose upon me,
For I'm unpractised, sir, in any art
Of servile fawning ; and I have to fear,
If I am crush'd beneath such wretchedness,
My grief will force me on to errors.

Mord. 'Sdeath ! do you prate in this huge tone to me ?

Hugo. I would that I were master of a style
That might convey to you the grateful sense
Of duty and obedience that I feel :
But where my crude expressions fail in this,
Lay not the accusation to my heart.

Mord. Unparallel'd assurance ! thou vile dross :
Stand'st thou upon a level with me thus,
To hold discourse, and prate about thy heart ?
I'll teach you duty, sirrah ! hence, away.

(strikes him)

Hugo. *(starts)* Ha ! is it real ? my blood at this disgrace

Dashes against my heart with violence ;
And in a passive slave, twould rouse resentment.
Know, ruffian ! that there still is left in me
As much of manhood, as will tender back
This brutal violence upon thy head ; *(draws his sword)*
Yet stay ; what would my sword ! tis not alone
Against this villain, that I turn its edge :
He's my officer : the sacred head
Of fair authority would here be wounded
In my first thrust at him. Forbear, forbear
My useless sword. Peace, peace my wounded heart—
(throws down his sword)

Tis my cruel fate, and not my baseness,
That suffers thus thy shame.

Mord. Black mutiny:

The rein is slackened here beyond its bound ;
And on the mild forbearances of power,
Rebellion rises up. Thou deadly serpent,
I'll have thee as a rebel pinion'd straight. [*exit Mordred*]

Hugo. Villain ! thy threats I scorn ; for well I know,
Power has not here a hold to fasten on me :
But thy vile usage opens to my soul
A gulf of misery it can never ford.
Surely the sons of honor should be safe
From usages that damp the spirit's growth ;
And he that may to-morrow have to meet
His country's enemy at his sword's length,
Should not to day be treated like a slave !
But so it is. I must not reason now ;
For, if I look upon the space before me,
My life, or sense, will quickly be subdued !
No, no : I'll shun the storm ; and, since I am
Discarded and rejected by my kind,
I'll go and seek the fellowship of brutes :
And thus my king, I throw with grief and sorrow
Thy jurisdiction off ; desert thy standard,
Which but now I would have perish'd to defend.
And now, Bartholomy, thou good old man,
Thy friendship, and thy love, shall now be tried ;
My helpless wife will I bequeath to thee. [*exit in haste*]

enter MORDRED and guards.

Mord. Twas on this ground the villain drew upon
me.

Call out the regiment and scour the country.

[*exeunt soldiers*]

In his escape I serve lord Rodmond much,
And lay a snare to get possession of
His beauteous wife, whose temper I will bend.
Her tent is close at hand ; I'll to her straight.

[*exit Mordred*]

SCENE III—*changes to another view of the camp.*

Agn. Oh ! bitter fortune ! why thus press the fallen ?
Why in thy giddy round dost thou pass by
The worthless, and the undeserving many,
To crush the few who labor to do good ?
Heaven knows that in the wearied round of life,
I ever follow'd truth, and honor'd virtue :
The tender precepts of a loving mother,
Have ne'er been violated by acts of folly ;
Nor has my mind e'er nourish'd aught to bring
This heavy burden on my wretched head.
But I am wrong, perhaps, in grieving thus ;
Then let me suffer with a gentle spirit,
The ills which sorrow cannot count, or cure.

enter MORDRED.

Mord. I have sought you, madam, in a happy hour :
But I disturb, I fear, your meditations.

Agn. This wretch, again ! I tremble to behold him.
Your visit, sir, has ta'en me by surprise ;
I look'd not for it.

Mord. (*with violence*) Is your husband here ?

Agn. (*with mildness*) No, worthy sir, my husband
is not here.

Mord. Say, quickly, madam, know you aught about
him ?

Agn. I know but this—where'er my husband is,
Tis there I'm certain, sir, his duty calls him.

Mord. Your beauty merits a far better fate.

Agn. I love my husband, sir ; and she that bears
The sacred name of wife, and does not, does it shame.
Charms I have none, for I am like the flower
Whose beauty sets with its inspiring sun.
Go, sir, and suffer me to seek a place
Where my afflicted heart may meet with rest.

Mord. Nay, do not stain that lovely face with tears ;
My roughness was assumed.—I am your friend.
Know, I have the means and influence to prefer

Both him and you above your present state ;
And straight will do't. But I am not a man
To profer unrequited benefits :

You know already how you may repay me.

Agn. What fiend has cast in thy infernal mind,
A thought so full of infamy as this ?
Thou bear'st the shape of man. Would'st thou deceive,
And kill with thy envenom'd snares, what heaven
Has given thee to protect—defenceless woman ?
She that was form'd to ornament your life,
And sooth your rugged nature into gentleness ;
And would'st thou trample on her ? hence, away.

Mord. Fair, stubborn dame,
You now are in my power. (*approaches her*)

Agn. Off, miscreant ! off. The arm you stretch to
grasp me,
Shall wither in the act. Hence, villain ! hence !
All unsupported here by earthly power,
I fear thee now no more, than, whilst I trust
In heaven, I fear that hell which sat thee on.

(*a noise without—Mordred shrinks backwards,
and exit*)

Mord. How now, but I will punish the intruder.

Agn. O break my heart ; and weep, weep quick my
eyes.

Must poverty bear rude attacks like this ?
Must needy innocence still bear the scoff
Of pamper'd villany ? break, break my heart !

(*a violent clashing of swords without*)

But hark ! there's noise without. I tremble at it.
This villain has, perhaps, accomplices.

(*the noise increases*)

HUGO enters in great perturbation—his sword drawn
and bloody.

Speak, speak ; ha ! there's blood upon thy sword !
Alas ! alas, my love, what has befallen thee ?

Hugo. Farewell, farewell ! (*puts up his sword*)
I must depart with speed. (*attempts to go*)

Agn. Ha ! this is frenzy ! nay, thou shalt not go.

Hugo. I am a murderer ! and must hide from justice.
As I approach'd, I heard the villain's threats,
And raised that noise, which shook his coward heart.
He drew his sword, and with a rude assault
The villain struck me twice. To guard my life,
I threw a bold defiance in his face:
Thy wrongs and keen despair did brace my sinews,
And justice dash'd the villain to the earth.

Agn. For me, for me hast thou exposed thy life ?

Hugo. Hence : we must separate, or we are lost.
Farewell ! here's a letter ; haste to London ;
There find our generous friend, Bartholomy.
I have bequeath'd you to his care and pity ;
And what a father would, on my account,
That man will do for you. Adieu, my love !
A moment longer, and we're lost. Farewell,
Farewell ! and may that sacred power, that is
The sufferer's hope and help, be near thee still.

[exeunt severally]

SCENE IV—*changes to Highly-house.*

enter BARTHOLOMY and BUTLER.

Barth. Now, this way, and you shall hear all. You remember I told you about my late good master's son, who was disinherited by his father.

Butl. I do.

Barth. And you remember that his misfortunes were occasioned by the unhappy youth's marrying against his father's will.

Butl. I remember all.

Barth. Then hark ye now ; this poor, friendless girl, proves at length to be of high nobility ; proves to be the sole relative of the lord Ruthven, but now returned from the wars. Here are letters from him, and he is coming with the speed of post, to advise with me on the surest means to find his suffering niece, and to restore her to her rightful rank again. No wonder, then, good butler, I am joyful.

Butl. Well, it's natural enough to have an affection for a good master's son : for the master we have, if we could only see him oftener, I would serve him were there not a holiday in the year.

Barth. But, good butler, you must know more of him for certain than you have told me. This is an ancient and privileged estate, and my wonder is, how a stranger could come by it.

Butl. Why, sir, I can tell you. This estate had long been in the possession of a family, the youth of which had done great feats in the wars ; and from thence, have had honors and privileges conferred upon them by the state. Such as that of presiding in the district on great matters ; sitting as judges in the neighboring courts ; which honors are still attached to the estate. But, the late possessor falling into a dissolute life, it was brought into debt ; the which to pay, it fell to public sale, and few bidders having appeared, it came easy into our master's hands.

Barth. I thank thee, butler. This is a good account : and when lord Ruthven arrives, I'll hear thee farther on the subject. Yonder are riders that come full post, and chariots at their heels : tis our expected guest. I'll out and give him welcome. [*exit Bartholomy*]

Butl. Whoe'er they are they bear authority. Tis likely we shall have rare furbishing in the old castle, if we may guess by the show of followers. Every thing is wild and out of order. But why do I tarry here, when to direct these matters, there's none but me. [*exit*]

enter lord RUTHVEN and BARTHOLOMY.

Barth. Tis strange ! tis wonderful indeed, my lord.

Lord Ruth. Here in this house ; with you ! my niece, my child !

Barth. My lord, it doth appear e'en like a dream. This very moment as I cross'd the portico,
Beside the granate column of the gate.
'There sat a lovely woman ; o'er her head
The skirt of her dishevel'd robe was thrown ;
Her garments, like the drooping flowers around,

Were laden with the dew : her head reclined
In attitude denoting grief or sleep.

I took in mine, her death-like whiten'd hand,
Which pended by her side : I found it warm ;
And, drawing from her dewy face, the veil
That hid her features—there beheld your niece.
The tears gush'd forth—she senseless fell to th' earth.

Lord Ruth. I prithee, sir, go on ; heed not my feelings.

Barth. Amongst the crowd that gather'd to behold
her,

Our master came, and bore her to the house :
And order'd that his servants, and equipages,
Should be at her command. And this, my lord,
With adding, that, though in a feeble state,
Your niece is here, and safe, is all I know.

Lord Ruth. O what a debt to him, and you, I owe.
Till I've beheld her generous host, I will
Repress the strong desire to see my niece.

The gratitude that urges my request,
Will plead my strong excuse. Come, come, my friend.

Barth. This way, my lord, and I will lead you to
him. *[exeunt*

SCENE V—*another gothic chamber.*

Sir THOMAS DE MORVILLE disguised examining papers—he rises and walks about in great agitation.

Sir Tho. To that high providence that saved my
life,

From the effects of my presuming rashness,
And unexpected, now restores to me
A dear, lost daughter, do I bend in gratitude.
O ! that the wondrous man who saved my life,
Would authorize me to disclose myself :

But this, I am forbid soliciting.

It is my duty, then, to wait his calling.

I'll not be quite so close as I have been,
For this occurrence, has revived my griefs.

Oh ! I can scarcely bear the load of thought.

enter BARTHOLOMY *and* lord RUTHVEN.

Barth. Lord Ruthven, sir. My lord, our generous master.

Lord Ruth. I come to offer up before your goodness, My earnest gratitude and humble thanks.

Sir Tho. My lord, you take me by surprise. To me ! Say, when, and how, my lord, I've done you kindness ?

Lord Ruth. This very morning ; not an hour ago : This moment : now, you do me weighty kindness.

Sir Tho. Me, my good lord.

Lord Ruth. Do not dispute the truth.
That poor out-cast, that suffering creature, sir,
That your heaven-bless'd bounty found forlorn,
And that you now do foster as your own,
Is my dear relative, my niece ; my child
And heiress, sir, to all lord Ruthven has.

Sir Tho. Your niece, my lord, I fear has suffered much.

Lord Ruth. Ay, sir ; I have to think of it with grief.
She married rashly, a young gentleman,
In secret from her lowly friends. I own,
The Morville family was far above her :
But yet, while I was bleeding in the field,
And gaining honors for the name of Villemore,
I cannot think this tender branch of it
Was so degrading as she has been held.
I think sir Thomas Morville was severe :
But heaven forbid I should reproach the dead.

Sir Tho. (*aside*) Ah ! here's another heavy, heavy reek'ning.

Lord Ruth. But, sir, I'll not distress your gentleness
With my domestic troubles—and I pray,
That I may have an audience of my niece.

Sir Tho. My lord, I doubt her strength for such a meeting :

And, if it please you, we will give it out
That you're a friend of mine on visit here ;

With this assumption you may safely see her :
But she is here, to sooth your fond affection.

enter AGNES, much dejected.

Madam, good day. I hope you gather strength.
Our hapless charge, my lord. Our friend, dear lady.

Lord Ruth. (aside) Is this my niece ? I dare not
look upon her,

Lest my strong feelings should perforce give way.

Agn. (to sir Thomas) O generous sir, when I have
used all words

That language has afforded gratitude,
And thank'd you every hour of every day
That I shall live on earth, in other worlds,
I will entreat your goodness its reward.

Barth. (aside to lord Ruthven) It must not be ; I
pray be counsell'd, sir.

Lord Ruth. Then still unknown, I'll feast my sight
upon

The beauty, and the manners of this creature,
That does my blood such honor. Pardon, lady,
But I have known some friends of yours abroad :
I've seen your uncle, in a foreign land.

Agn. My uncle, sir !

Lord Ruth. Ay, lady ; and on good authority,
Can tell you he is rich, and loves you well.

Agn. Some time ago he purposed coming home :
Know you of this, or is he on his way ?

Lord Ruth. I know that he is not upon his way.

Agn. Alas ! I'm sorry. Since I knew myself,
I've hoped and look'd for his return with joy.
I hold myself an orphan till I see him.

I never saw my father ; and my heart
Has long transferred a parent's love to him :
For he has been the guardian of my youth.

Lord Ruth. You often thought of him in absence
then ?

Agn. Oh ! were my mother living, she could tell !
But now that I have cast my memory back

To my dear early home, I have indeed,
A thought, dear sir, that I have seen you there.

Barth. No, never, lady. (*aside*) Spare her, my good lord.

Lord Ruth. I would, for my own happiness and hers,

I had not gone so far. No, fair lady,
You never saw me there. I have not been
So near your place of birth, as now I am,
For more than your life's term.

Agn. Oh! pardon me,
Your arching temples—and inclining cheek,
Are plain upon my memory.—(*viewing him*) Can it
be? (*pulls out from her bosom, a medallion
picture of her uncle—examines him first, and
then the picture*)

Oh! heavens! it is my loving uncle's picture,
That you so strongly, sir, remind me of.

(*gazing upon him*)

Lord Ruth. He must be more than man who can resist

This gush of nature—yes my tender niece——

Sir Tho. (*interrupting lord Ruthven*) Forbear
this rash disclosure of yourself.

Her tender frame, reduced to this low state,
Cannot yet bear a joy so unexpected.

Lord Ruth. Who can behold such grief and loveliness, (*Agnes sinks in his arms*)

And tamely gaze, or stand a cold spectator,
When, by a gentle word, her ills are banish'd?
Revive, revive, thou injured innocent,
And in a loving kinsman's fond embrace,
With joy receive a father, friend, protector!

Sir Tho. Bear her with tenderest care into her chamber.

[*exeunt supporting Agnes*]

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

A C T V.

SCENE I—*a gothic hall in the house of sir Thomas Morville.*

enter BUTLER in great haste.

Butl. Here's riot ; here's confusion, and uproar. It's curst unmannerly, though, to disturb people from their comforts. Just as I was about to finish my second bottle—glass, I mean—bang goes the great bell of the gate, and away go grooms, horses, coaches and coachmen, smack, higgledy-piggledy, in a minute : but here comes one will make these doubtful matters clear.

enter BARTHOLOMY.

Pray, now, master Bartholomy, develope quickly, the cause of all this noise and sudden flight.

Barth. A piteous cause it is, and loudly to be lamented. Letters, but now arrived, have brought most heavy news. Morville, is proclaimed the murderer of his officer. Lord Ruthven has, on this, been summoned to his regiment ; and the discovery of his niece, with the sad distress of that fair creature, has cast a gloom and sorrow o'er all the house. But saidst thou not, good butler, that they all were gone ?

Butl. Ay, truly, and with a vengeance too. Well, a good journey to them, say I. and a merry one.

Barth. And our worthy master ?

Butl. Nay, as for that, master Bartholomy, he is gone to bed in strange perturbation. The doctor hath administered his best skill, and says he'll soon recover. But such doings are incomprehensible to me.

Barth. This is strange indeed !

Butl. Then, there's that sweet, distressed lady ; she

whisk'd pass me like a jack o'-lantern as I entered. "Good butler," says she, "let me have horses; I must away." Sweet madam, says I, the carriages, the horses, the drivers and their whips, are all gone off with their utmost speed. "Then," says she, "I will hence on foot, let the peril be what it may." Then away flies she, and before I could say good morrow, the dear soul was bounce through the outward portal of the castle. If you call not this a mystery, say I have no knowledge of things that are to come. Strange, quotha!—ha! ha! ha! it's more than strange, that such things are to be tolerated without consulting me. I find I am no more respected than the mewling of a mountain cat, the roaring of an elephant, or the clack of a water-mill, in the dog-days. Strange, quotha!—ha! ha! ha! all this is more than strange. [exit

Barth. Tis strange! her uncle gone; and in such haste?

Why do I hesitate and tarry here?

Nor shalt thou, injured lady, trudge the way.

I will procure the means, and they shall find,

That we can follow, and not far behind.

[exit

SCENE II—*changes to an intricate and romantic place in the forest—the CHIEF of a BANDITTI leaning on the clump of a tree—he blows his horn.*

Chief. Why have not my men assembled? (*blows his horn again*) They'll answer that, no doubt. (*a sound is heard in return*) So, the day advances; the time draws on for deeds that like not looking on—when nature folds up herself, and they who keep her laws begin to look for shelter. But what is this to me? I am an outlaw: to nature, and to sick society, a surplus growth; a wen on order's face, that feeds on its own destruction. (*pause*) Where are my men? (*sounds again*) Here they are, obedient.

the BANDITTI enter from various sides.

Now, my men, what news abroad?

1 *Rob.* We've reconnoitered, sir, the western road, and look for game to-night.

Chief. Good. What else?

1 *Rob.* We have to tell you further. When this morning we broke from you, about the forest's skirts, we saw some men in arms, as if in quest of something nestled there : and I much fear that our late successes may have raised the hue and cry against us.

Chief. Have you gathered aught beside?

1 *Rob.* Why, faith, the cry is loudly up : we are more the talk than state affairs ; but where we haunt, is never once suspected.

Chief. Why should it, man ? could they once suppose we would venture housing here in Highly forest, close to their very judges, and their jails ! marry, their brains could never round the thought. But are we all assembled ?

1 *Rob.* All but one, who is on the forest's skirts, to give us note if any thing approaches. (*a call is heard*)

Chief. Hark ! there's booty on the road. Disperse, disperse.
[*they all rush off*]

enter a party of SOLDIERS.

Serg. Forward ; halt. This is the first time I ever bore arms in anger.

2 *Sold.* And pray what offends thee now, brother soldier ? for my part, I know not yet what we are sent out upon.

Serg. Marry, we are sent out to seek the deserter, who they say has killed his officer. There's a huge reward offered for him ; and there's another of equal weight, if we can pick up the banditti who frequent this forest : and it hath angered me that none of them have been civil enough to come in our way.

2 *Sold.* Prithee, who is this crusty gentleman, who has been spurring us on so much to search for the deserter.

Serg. One that has something for a thief to take ! the lord Rodmond. But be vigilant, for he is not far

behind us. We must forward. I have learnt the forest's several avenues, its passes, and its outlets. Follow as I shall lead. [*exeunt*]

SCENE III—*another part of the forest*—HUGO DE MORVILLE *descends from a tree.*

Hugo. How many days of banishment and misery,
Have I to pass in this bleak solitude,
Before this body sinks to peaceful rest ?
Since I have been a fugitive, I've hid,
With all the fears of guilt, amongst these mountains.
By night I've travell'd, and have lurk'd by day,
In the rank weedy ditch, or bushy tree,
As chance afforded : without tasting once
The warm and wholesome meal, or mingled draught
That man requires. My only food, has been
The dreary bushes' kernels where I lay ;
My drink, the nearest stream : but now
My strength is failing, and my soul begins
To bode some crisis of my fate at hand.
Oh ! my poor Agnes ! art thou doom'd, like me,
To suffer pangs and misery like this ?
No ! heaven, although its visitation falls
So heavily on me, will watch thy steps,
And bid its angels guard thy kindred goodness.
The hope doth give my trembling sinews strength,
And I will strain their last.

(*goes out and returns quickly*)

They're close upon me.
I can distinguish armed men about
The forest ; and I must regain my shelter.

(*ascends the tree*)

enter SERGEANT *and first* SOLDIER, *with caution.*

Serg. Heard you nothing ?

I Sold. I heard a rustling, and I thought, a voice.
I'll this way, and see if aught I can discover.

(*looks about*)

Serg. There must be something hereabout, robber, or deserter, is all one to us. Come, brother, we'll farther this way, towards the road. *[exeunt]*

(Hugo descends from the tree, in agitation)

Hugo. They are in quest of me, and there is now
No earthly hope, or safety, but in flight.
I have retain'd my sword for my defence.
Yet ne'er will use it but to guard my life.

[exit precipitately at the opposite side]

enter lord RUTHVEN and attendants, speaking as he enters.

Lord Ruth. Lead on the horses down the safest
path ;

We'll take this nearer road on foot, and meet you
At the extreme division of the road.

I should enjoy such pleasing solitude,
Did not my strange affairs at home cry haste,
And urge me onward with all swift despatch.

[exeunt the same way Hugo did]

enter BANDITTI.

Chief. Come on, come on : this is a golden prize.

[exeunt after lord Ruthven]

after a pause, pistols are fired—enter BARTHOLOMY supporting AGNES.

Barth. Nay, fear not, madam ; we are bravely arm'd :
And now we're safe, and overtake our friends.

Agn. I sink with terror !

Barth. Fear not, gentle lady.
We have been set upon by robbers here,
But have so well return'd their rude attack,
That danger will not now assail us more.

*(a violent noise is heard, and clashing of swords—
Agnes is supported by Bartholomy—HUGO is seen
through the back wood giving way to lord RUTHVEN)*

Hugo. You wrong me, sir. Forbear, forbear, and leave me.

Lord Ruth. Deliver up thyself, and band, to justice, Or I will strike thee down without a prayer.

Hugo. To heaven I can appeal in scorn of thee ; And I have borne too much of wretched life, To fear to lose it now. But, haughty sir, Remember, that with all your boast, it still Is sword to sword. Respect yourself, and leave me.

(Lord Ruthven presses upon him—Hugo gives way, and disarms Lord Ruthven—Agnes discovers Hugo, and screams—Hugo drops his sword—they rush into each other's arms)

Hugo. O heaven ! the angel semblance of my wife ! Look up, look up, and cast reproaches on me, For all the fears, the countless woes I've cost thee.

(Agnes appears unable to speak)

Lord Ruth. *(supporting Agnes)* Speak, gentle sufferer, and expound this riddle.

Agn. Tis he, tis he, my lord : reduced to misery, All ignorant he had a friend so near ; And robb'd of every means of life besides, He stoop'd beneath a private soldier's fare : But spare, in pity spare the sad recital Of all the black distress that still hath follow'd. Is he, on earth, o god ! can suffer more ?

Lord Ruth. Just heaven ! and is he leagued with the banditti !

Is his depravity of this extent ?

Ay, ay ; it is tenfold to what I fear'd.

Come, sweet lady, we must not tarry here.

Agn. Hold ! she who bears the sacred name of wife, And will not hazard all to honor it, Can ne'er be worthy of a husband's love. If tis her glory that she can augment His happiness, then, be it still her aim. *(embraces Hugo)*

enter SERGEANT and soldiers.

Serg. Sir, I bear a warrant to arrest, and apprehend

you as a murderer, an outlaw, and a deserter from your king. Seize him. (*two soldiers seize him*)

Agn. Hold ! hold for mercy ! stay but for a moment.

Hugo. (*in the greatest agony*) Heaven ! are you men : and will you tear her from me ?

(*lord Ruthven and Bartholomy endeavor to support Agnes on one side—the soldiers, on the other, seize and force Hugo off*)

SCENE IV—*distant view of Rodmond castle.*

enter ARGALDUS and two SHEPHERDS in haste.

Arg. My worthy friends, you're punctual, and I thank you.

This is indeed a timely evidence.

I now have seen some stragglers on the road,

Whose gaze I would with every caution shun.

If you will travel onward to the next

Division of the road, and wait my orders,

I'll pay you with my grateful love, and thanks.

1 *Shep.* We'll obey you, holy father, with all true reverence and respect. [*exeunt shepherds*]

Arg. It is the dark, designing, guilty Rodmond,

And his leagued band of ruffians I would shun.

But they are here—I cannot pass unnoticed,

And for my safety I will take this shelter.

(*Argaldus retires—and when Rodmond advances to speak, he listens*)

enter RODMOND with letters, and a messenger in haste.

Rodm. Tis well : onward, and wait my further orders. [*exit messenger*]

Ha ! now he's caged secure. Yes, I have seen him ;

At length he's manacled and safe. Tis well ;

And now, long famish'd vengeance, have thy fill.

About, my brain, and find the swiftest means
To rid me of this dangerous, deadly rival.
I'm told the court demands his instant trial.
I'll hence and forge on its authority.
And give it out that I am sent his judge.
At college I have aptly studied law ;
And with assumed appointment in my hand,
I'll gain admittance to his judgment seat :
And try if wealth, and power assumed, for once
Will be my friend, and give my soul revenge !
Then, when the court is o'er, my foe despatch'd,
And I safe seated in the house of Morville,
I'll build a monument and worship thee. [exit

ARGALDUS comes forward.

Arg. Abhorred villain ! swift, swift must thou be
Indeed, and strong, to guard thy guilty self
From that offended power which soon shall reach
thee.

Now will I straight despatch a messenger,
Who shall bear these plans to sir Thomas Morville :
And he, as legal judge, shall, for a while
Consent to this most daring usurpation.
And, when th' impostor thinks himself secure,
Bear evidence to hurl him from his seat.
There is no other course but this. Then, hence !
For tardiness were guilt in such a cause. [exit

SCENE V—a street.

enter ARGALDUS and lord RUTHVEN, greatly agitated.

Lord Ruth. Most worthy man, relate this horrid tale.

Arg. Thus, then, my lord, let me resolve your doubts.

Know, that I've long possess'd a secret knowledge
Of this creation, passing other men :

And while, for good, I thus enjoy'd my power,
Being by malice banish'd from the world,
Lived in a bleak and solitary cave ;
Where, from my studies, and my skill in herbs,
Many in sickness did resort for aid.

The fame the mountain shepherds gave my art,
Soon travell'd forth. Mongst those who sought my
help,

There came an agent from this wicked lord :

He gave me money, and demanded of me

A drug that would extinguish precious life !

Lord Ruth. Is't possible ! and for what use design'd ?

Arg. Anon, my friend, you'll hear. I saw his drift,

And gave him in its stead, a subtle vapor,

Of curious power, but wide of what he sought :

And, by a secret way, I follow'd him,

And saw him, under orders of lord Rodmond,

Use it with horrid purposes of murder,

Upon sir Thomas Morville, in his sleep.

Lord Ruth. Heavens ! do I hear aright ? does he then live ?

Arg. It will appear, my lord, he does : and, that

His son, the husband of your niece, is innocent.

His malice, next, not glutted with the father,

Began to seek the life of this his son ;

And from his hell-devised arts alone,

This suffering youth hath had his miseries.

Lord Ruth. My good old man ! there shines through this your tale,

An earnest and an honest zeal, which stamps it true.

The court is now prepared, and I attend you :

And may that power, who watches o'er the just,

Guide, and direct the wisdom that presides ;
 And bid the seat of human judgment mark,
 And emulate its higher attributes,
 By tempering justice with the shield of mercy.

[*exeunt*]

SCENE VI—*a grand view of a hall of justice—the jury seated on one side, the counsellors and witnesses on the other—the court filled with spectators, officers, soldiers, shepherds, &c.—RODMOND discovered seated on the bench—sir THOMAS DE MORVILLE, lord RUTHVEN, on one side, and AGNES, BARTHOLOMY, &c. on the other.*

Rodm. Now, order quickly forth the prisoners,
 And let the court proceed.

Officer of the court. My lord, amongst the prisoners who stand for trial, is one for murder : is it your lordship's pleasure he shall be first brought forth.

Rodm. In this we do not hesitate a moment :
 For every breath a murderer lives to draw,
 Puts sober pacing justice on the wing,
 And is contamination to the air.
 The murderer first to justice. Bring him forth.

enter HUGO, guarded by two officers.

Rodm. Now, let the prosecution be declared.

Couns. My lord, this man, most falsely named Monmouth.

But truly, Hugo de Morville, is here
 Indicted for the abhorred crime of murder ;
 And if there's aught can aggravate this deed,
 'Tis contained in the shape of his offence.
 For, fallen from duty to his god, and king,
 He hath put forth his hand against his officer,
 Whom he should have defended and obey'd ;
 For which, may he be judged justly here.

Rodm. Produce your proofs to this most heavy charge,

For, lacking these, the prisoner must be free.

Couns. They are at hand, my lord. Stand forth,
and swear. *(to the sergeant)*

Serg. Passing near the tent of this my brother soldier, upon my duty near the midnight hour, I discovered the officer of the watch, our then adjutant, wounded to death. I approached and spoke. He told me, as he lay stretched upon the ground, it was my brother soldier, standing now before this court, that wounded him. This do I swear!

Rodm. Alas! too much already have I heard:

Let not my potent feelings here obtrude,

Fair justice and the court must now decide.

And let those only speak in his behalf,

Who can undo this fatal proof of guilt.

Agn. Then, my good lord, allow my feeble voice,
To plead before this high and honor'd court:

And let it be recorded, I beseech,

That one weighed down by black adversity,

Whose cheering view of happiness is fled,

Never to be recalled in this sad life,

Shall, in this, her sorrowing and trying hour,

Relate those things which truth alone shall dictate.

Thus, then, it was, my lord: upon the night

That this unhappy quarrel did take place,

While sadly musing in my husband's tent,

And grieving for those ills which still have press'd us,

The officer, whose loss you now deplore,

Came, and, with rude and boisterous threats,

Essay'd, repeatedly, to fasten on me:

When, at the very moment of my danger,

My husband came, in contact with the ruffian:

High words, and weapons, follow'd this attack;

And, in the issue, the offender fell.

This, my good lord, I do avouch on oath!

And, who is he, I will appeal to nature,

Like him provoked, would not have done as he did!

Justice, my lord ! I do demand acquittal.

Rodm. Did not the crime forbid, I here would listen,

And let my nature's softness plead your cause :
But justice cries aloud to heal those wrongs,
Which frenzied passion has, in rage, committed.
The crime is high, establish'd, manifest ;
And therefore must the court proceed to judgment.

Sir Tho. My lord, till I am heard, and fully too,
I do arrest the judgment of the court.

Is there not in our polish'd country's laws,
A place for mercy ? yes, I know there is.
This poor distressed youth, in all his troubles,
Has been the dupe of black and cruel malice,
Aim'd by his secret foes against his life.

Rodm. Who dares to interrupt the course of justice ?

Bear hence this rash intruder.

Sir Tho. (*looking at Rodmond*) Gracious judge,
Bend not your threatening and protentious brows
Upon me thus, or I shall sink before you ;
For out of the bright portals of your eyes,
Fair justice looks so manifest, that all
Irreverence must perish at your glance.
And, well I know, you'll hear fair evidence.

Rodm. Proceed, proceed ; and we shall do our best

To study mercy.

Lord Ruth. This is son to the late sir Thomas Morville,

Who, on the very night he did deprive
This youth of his inheritance, expired.
Unseen, in bed, he died.

Sir Tho. Not so, not so.

The father of this injured youth before you,
As far, at least, as went the instrument,
Was poison'd !

Rodm. (*furiously*) Shall justice on her throne be baited thus ?

Seize, seize, I say, and drag him from the court.

(comes down)

Sir Tho. Was poison'd by his nephew—by lord Rodmond!

Who, forging on the authority of state,
Like a vile criminal now stands before you,
Usurping here the seat of sacred justice.

Guards! guards! (*enter guards*) approach and seize that criminal!

Be it now known to this most honor'd court,
That from the power attach'd to this estate,
Tis my prerogative to sit as judge:

And, when I would address this jury's ear,
Forbid it heaven, that any wish of mine,
Should tend to prejudice your noble minds.

It is the glory of the english law,
That to her proudly independent juries,
Her highest judges, only sit to serve,
So sit I here; to serve, and not direct.

(*ascends the bench*)

Bring in those witnesses, who wait without.

enter MORDRED and ARGALDUS—Rodmond starts back horror-struck.

Rodm. (aside) Sink earth, and hide me, for I now am lost.

Sir Tho. Behold an unexpected visitant!
An evidence to save the innocent.
This is the wretch who fell beneath the blow
Provoked, which this unhappy youth did give;
But well for justice, he out-lived his wounds.
For, sheltering in a neighboring shepherd's cot,
And all unknown but to this holy hermit,
He by degrees did gather strength, and out
Of gratitude for such high blessing,
Stands forth, this day, to save the innocent.
Say, on your sacred oath, is this the truth?

Mord. This do I swear is truth.

Sir Tho. Who set you on ?

Mord. Lord Rodmond.

Sir Tho. Jurors, from the proof you've heard,
Pronounce aloud, the sentence of the law.

Jury. The jury, say, acquit the prisoner.

(the whole court show an expression of joy—Agnes and Hugo embrace)

Sir Tho. Now let this dark, designing, high delinquent,

Bound in those chains with which he crush'd the helpless,

Be now led forth a criminal, before

That seat of justice which he has profaned ;

And hear most heavy charges proved against him.

Come forward, worthiest of men, and here,

Declare what thou dost know of this usurper !

Arg. Be it then known to this most upright court,

The very wretch who aided him in all his crimes,

Has since been butcher'd by his murderous hand——

Witness, this dagger, with his name upon't ;

These papers, histories of all his crimes,

Found by these shepherds, near the murder'd body.

Sir Tho. But, if he languishes for other evidence,

With horror, and with anguish let him know,

That he, De Morville, whom he did essay

To murder, is, at this very moment, living.

(takes off his mask, and throws off his disguise—

Rodmond is terror-struck—the court appear astonished)

I do implore the judgment of the court.

Jury. Guilty !

Hugo. O, heaven ! it is, it is my father ! *(kneels)*

Rodm. A curse on him who saved him from my
fury !

Cursed be his wealth to you, my deadly foe ;

And to the brood that henceforth you may rear !

Expression of my hatred to your name,

Shall fill each hurried breath I have to draw.

Sunk be the earth : or may the fiery sun,

Consume, or parch it into barrenness :
For then, perhaps, will Rodmond be remember'd.
Come, to the scaffold ! in the pangs of death
I'll hate, and curse you, with my latest breath.

[exit guarded]

Sir Tho. This vast of wickedness, I grieve to witness ;

But heaven has mercy still surpassing it.

Now gentle fair, (*Agnes kneels*) most loved, and most abused,

Rise up, and be acknowledged my daughter.

(embraces her)

Thou wert a jewel in an humble earth,
And well I now might hide my head in shame,
At casting thee away.

Agn. My gentle father,

The lowering cloud, which, in our former days,
With chilling blight hung over us, shall now
In sunny brightness gild the hours to come ;
And the sad tears which piteous sorrow dropt,
Will temper with the milder joys of age.

And you, dear sir, I hope, shall long behold
Your children revered for their truth and virtue.

Sir Tho. Heaven grant thy prayer. And, now, my son,

Receive a father's blessing on your union ;

(joining their hands)

For now I hold you worthy of my name.

Hugo. This goodly presence, and all things around me,

That seem to all my senses palpable,
Being real, appear but as a dream ;
And joy has been so long a stranger to me,
That in this wondrous change of fate, I ill
Can bear its sudden gush about my heart.

Sir Tho. Compose yourself, and be henceforward bless'd.

Now, hence, my friends : we'll straight to Morville-house,

H

L. of C.

And there resolve each doubt, and mystery,
That hang as yet between us unreveal'd.
Come, let us hence, e'er crowds beset our way ;
For many tongues will speak of us to-day.
This is our moral, and I hold it just,
The good, *may* suffer ; but, the guilty *must*.

THE END OF THE HOUSE OF MORVILLE.

EPILOGUE.

SPOKEN BY AGNES.

A play's a law-suit, quaking at the end on't,
The plaintiff, author, sues; the town, defendant;
The judges, you; the students farther back;
The prologue's the solicitor in black:
The counsel, I. My lords—nay, no denial—
I move, to-morrow night for a new trial.
Rule granted? thanks! th' effect my fee secures;
This hand is nobly paid, when you clap yours.
But hold; no joking. Veil me, tragic fog!
Grave plays demand a gloomy epilogue.

Suppose me Juliet: may I beg yon beau
To treat the public with a Romeo?
Here's a clear stage, "exceeding snug." Nay, why
So bashful, man? then both the parts I'll try;
And "you, the judges, bear a wary eye."

"Lady, by yon bright moon I swear." "Be steady;
"Dont swear by the moon," you're mad enough already.
House. You can't sit here, sir—what are you about?
Sir, I was in, sir. No, sir, there you're out:
Silence, you ins, and outs.—"We'll part no more,
"Fly to these arms."—Box-keeper, shut that door!
"Hist, Romeo, hist! love fears no harsh rebuff!"
Yes, I am Romeo—hist, that's plain enough.
House. Encore! ha, ha! off, off!—go on—dont stir:
Send in the manager. (*Agnes*) Your pleasure, sir.

House. Psha ! stuff ! what, you the manager ? a woman ?
(*Agnes*) When married, sir, you'll find that's not uncommon !

“ Sweet, while I live, I'll love : ” won't you ? oh, no !
Ny plan's quite different : “ while I live I'll crow !! ”

Thus, blown by fashion's gale, awhile to run
Down folly's tide, still floats the bubble, fun.
While comedy the gilded vapor quaffs,
From satire's cup ; and, as she sips, she laughs.

Soon shall the muse, in yonder classic dome,
Find a graced welcome, and a splendid home.
Each day we see her growing fane arise,
Till, like a phoenix—Drury seeks the skies !
Nor fear, while thus the giant braves the wind,
That I, though small, will long remain behind.
No ! dreading from the distance to look smaller,
I'll mount an *elephant*, to make me taller.

Give our poor bard nine nights ; he'll not repine :
Cats have nine lives—a white cat, five times nine !!!
Oh ! joyful pledge ! that smile dispel our fear,
And bids the house of Morville, prosper here.

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